This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

HW 2SF8 J

Digitized by Google

KE 4008.4(15)

This book belonged to
A. KINGSLEY PORTER
1883-1933

Φρενῶν
ἔλαχε καρπὸν
ἀμώμητον

HARVARD COLLEGE
LIBRARY

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

THE WORKS OF

WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY

IN THIRTY VOLUMES

LIMITED TO ONE THOUSAND REGISTERED SETS, OF WHICH THIS IS NUMBER 659

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

THANKSGIVING

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

[15]

THE WORKS OF

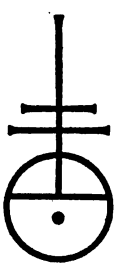
WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY

VOLUME THREE

P H I L I P

PART THREE

CATHERINE



THE JENSON SOCIETY
PRINTED FOR MEMBERS ONLY
MCMV

Digitized by Google

KE 40084 (15)

HARVARD UNIVERSITY LIBRARY JUN 12 1974

THE UNIVERSITY PRESS, CAMBRIDGE, MASS., U. S. A.

Digitized by Google

CONTENTS

VOL. III.

Chapter		Page
I.	In which we reach the Last Stage but One of this Journey	1
II.	The Realms of Bliss	9

CATHERINE: A STORY

I.	Introducing to the Reader the Chief Personages of this Narrative	41
II.	In which are depicted the Pleasures of a Sentimental Attachment	77
III.	In which a Narcotic is administered, and a Great Deal of Genteel Society depicted	91
IV.	In which Mrs. Catherine becomes an Honest Woman again	104
V.	Contains Mr. Brock's Autobiography, and Other Matter	118
VI.	The Adventures of the Ambassador, Mr. Macshane	134
VII.	Which embraces a Period of Seven Years	156

Digitized by Google

CONTENTS

Chapter		Page
VIII.	Enumerates the Accomplishments of Master Thomas Billings — Introduces Brock as Dr. Wood — And announces the Execution of Ensign Macshane	178
IX.	Interview between Count Galgenstein and Master Thomas Billings, when he informs the Count of his Parentage	197
X.	Shewing how Galgenstein and Mrs. Cat recognise Each Other in Marylebone Gardens — And how the Count drives her Home in his Carriage	211
XI.	Of Some Domestic Quarrels, and the Consequence thereof	224
XII.	Treats of Love, and prepares for Death	242
XIII.	Being a Preparation for the End	247
	Chapter the Last	250
	Another Last Chapter	257

A SHABBY GENTEEL STORY

I.		273
II.	How Mrs. Gann received Two Lodgers	284
III.	A Shabby Genteel Dinner, and Other Incidents of a Like Nature	300
IV.	In which Mr. Fitch proclaims his Love, and Mr. Brandon prepares for War	320
V.	Contains a Great Deal of Complicated Love-Making	330

Digitized by Google

CONTENTS

Chapter		Page
VI.	Describes a Shabby Genteel Marriage, and More Love-Making	351
VII.	Which brings a Great Number of People to Margate by the Steamboat	361
VIII.	Which treats of War and Love, and Many Things that are not to be understood in Chap. VII	370
IX.	Which threatens Death, but contains a Great Deal of Marrying	388

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

THANKSGIVING . . . . . *Frontispiece*
MRS. CATHERINE'S TEMPTATION . . . . . *Page* 54
THE INTERRUPTED MARRIAGE . . . . . „ 118
CAPTAIN BROCK APPEARS AT COURT WITH MY LORD PETERBOROUGH . . . . . „ 128
CATHERINE'S PRESENT TO MR. HAYES . . . „ 178

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

THE ADVENTURES OF PHILIP

CHAPTER I

IN WHICH WE REACH THE LAST STAGE BUT ONE OF THIS JOURNEY

ALTHOUGH poverty was knocking at Philip's humble door, little Charlotte in all her trouble never knew how menacing the grim visitor had been. She did not quite understand that her husband in his last necessity sent to her mother for his due, and that the mother turned away and refused him. "Ah," thought poor Philip, groaning in his despair, "I wonder whether the thieves who attacked the man in the parable were robbers of his own family, who knew that he carried money with him to Jerusalem, and waylaid him on the journey?" But again and again he has thanked God, with grateful heart, for the Samaritans whom he has met on life's road, and if he has not forgiven, it must be owned he has never done any wrong to those who robbed him.

Charlotte did not know that her husband was at his last guinea, and a prey to dreadful anxiety for her dear sake, for after the birth of her child a fever came upon her; in the delirium consequent upon which the poor thing was ignorant of all that happened round her. A

Digitized by Google

fortnight with a wife in extremity, with crying infants, with hunger menacing at the door, passed for Philip somehow. The young man became an old man in this time. Indeed, his fair hair was streaked with white at the temples afterwards. But it must not be imagined that he had not friends during his affliction, and he always can gratefully count up the names of many persons to whom he might have applied had he been in need. He did not look or ask for these succours from his relatives. Aunt and uncle Twysden shrieked and cried out at his extravagance, imprudence, and folly. Sir John Ringwood said he must really wash his hands of a young man who menaced the life of his own son. Grenville Woolcomb, with many oaths, in which brother-in-law Ringwood joined chorus, cursed Philip, and said he did n't care, and the beggar ought to be hung, and his father ought to be hung. But I think I know half-a-dozen good men and true who told a different tale, and who were ready with their sympathy and succour. Did not Mrs. Flanagan, the Irish laundress, in a voice broken by sobs and gin, offer to go and chare at Philip's house for nothing, and nurse the dear children? Did not Goodenough say, "If you are in need, my dear fellow, of course you know where to come;" and did he not actually give two prescriptions, one for poor Charlotte, and one for fifty pounds to be taken immediately, which he handed to the nurse by mistake? You may be sure she did not appropriate the money, for of course you know that the nurse was Mrs. Brandon. Charlotte has one remorse in her life. She owns she was jealous of the Little Sister. And now when that gentle life is over, when Philip's poverty trials are ended, when the children go sometimes and look wistfully at the grave of their dear Caroline, friend Charlotte leans her head against her husband's shoulder, and owns humbly how good,

Digitized by Google

how brave, how generous a friend heaven sent them in that humble defender.

Have you ever felt the pinch of poverty? In many cases it is like the dentist's chair, more dreadful in the contemplation than in the actual suffering. Philip says he never was fairly beaten, but on that day when, in reply to his solicitation to have his due, Mrs. Baynes's friend, Captain Swang, brought him the open ten-pound note. It was not much of a blow; the hand which dealt it made the hurt so keen. "I remember," says he, "bursting out crying at school because a big boy hit me a slight tap, and other boys said, 'Oh, you coward.' It was that I knew the boy at home, and my parents had been kind to him. It seemed to me a wrong that Bumps should strike me," said Philip; and he looked, while telling the story, as if he could cry about this injury now. I hope he has revenged himself by presenting coals of fire to his wife's relations. But this day, when he is enjoying good health, and competence, it is not safe to mention mothers-in-law in his presence. He fumes, shouts, and rages against them, as if all were like his; and his, I have been told, is a lady perfectly well satisfied with herself and her conduct in this world; and as for the next —— but our story does not dare to point so far. It only interests itself about a little clique of people here below — their griefs, their trials, their weaknesses, their kindly hearts.

People there are in our history who do not seem to me to have kindly hearts at all; and yet, perhaps, if a biography could be written from their point of view, some other novelist might show how Philip and *his* biographer were a pair of selfish worldlings unworthy of credit: how uncle and aunt Twysden were most exemplary people, and so forth. Have I not told you how many people at New York shook their heads when

Digitized by Google

Philip's name was mentioned, and intimated a strong opinion that he used his father very ill? When he fell wounded and bleeding, patron Tregarvan dropped him off his horse, and cousin Ringwood did not look behind to see how he fared. But these, again, may have had their opinion regarding our friend, who may have been misrepresented to them —— I protest as I look back at the past portions of this history, I begin to have qualms, and ask myself whether the folks of whom we have been prattling have had justice done to them; whether Agnes Twysden is not a suffering martyr justly offended by Philip's turbulent behaviour, and whether Philip deserves any particular attention or kindness at all. He is not transcendently clever; he is not gloriously beautiful. He is not about to illuminate the darkness in which the people grovel, with the flashing emanations of his truth. He sometimes owes money, which he cannot pay. He slips, stumbles, blunders, brags. Ah! he sins and repents — pray heaven — of faults, of vanities, of pride, of a thousand shortcomings! This I say — *Ego* — as my friend's biographer. Perhaps I do not understand the other characters round about him so well, and have overlooked a number of their merits, and caricatured and exaggerated their little defects.

Among the Samaritans who came to Philip's help in these his straits, he loves to remember the name of J. J., the painter, whom he found sitting with the children one day making drawings for them, which the good painter never tired to sketch.

Now if those children would have but kept Ridley's sketches, and waited for a good season at Christie's I have no doubt they might have got scores of pounds for the drawings; but then, you see, they chose to improve the drawings with their own hands. They painted the soldiers yellow, the horses blue, and so forth. On

Digitized by Google

the horses they put soldiers of their own construction. Ridley's landscapes were enriched with representations of "omnibuses," which the children saw and admired in the neighbouring New Road. I dare say, as the fever left her, and as she came to see things as they were, Charlotte's eyes dwelt fondly on the pictures of the omnibuses inserted in Mr. Ridley's sketches, and she put some aside and showed them to her friends, and said, "Does n't our darling show extraordinary talent for drawing? Mr. Ridley says he does. He did a great part of this etching."

But, besides the drawings, what do you think Master Ridley offered to draw for his friends? Besides the prescriptions of medicine, what drafts did Dr. Goodenough prescribe? When nurse Brandon came to Mrs. Philip in her anxious time, we know what sort of payment she proposed for her services. Who says the world is all cold? There is the sun and the shadows. And the heaven which ordains poverty and sickness sends pity, and love, and succour.

During Charlotte's fever and illness, the Little Sister had left her but for one day, when her patient was quiet, and pronounced to be mending. It appears that Mrs. Charlotte was very ill indeed on this occasion; so ill that Dr. Goodenough thought she might have given us all the slip: so ill that, but for Brandon, she would, in all probability, have escaped out of this troublous world, and left Philip and her orphaned little ones. Charlotte mended then: could take food, and liked it, and was specially pleased with some chickens which her nurse informed her were "from the country." "From Sir John Ringwood, no doubt?" said Mrs. Firmin, remembering the presents sent from Berkeley Square, and the mutton and the turnips.

"Well, eat and be thankful!" says the Little Sister,

Digitized by Google

who was as gay as a little sister could be, and who had prepared a beautiful bread sauce for the fowl; and who had tossed the baby, and who showed it to its admiring brother and sister ever so many times; and who saw that Mr. Philip had his dinner comfortable; and who never took so much as a drop of porter — at home a little glass sometimes was comfortable, but on duty, never, never! No, not if Dr. Goodenough ordered it! she vowed. And the doctor wished he could say as much, or believe as much, of all his nurses.

Milman Street is such a quiet little street that our friends had not carpeted it in the usual way; and three days after her temporary absence, as nurse Brandon sits by her patient's bed, powdering the back of a small pink infant that makes believe to swim upon her apron, a rattle of wheels is heard in the quiet street — of four wheels, of one horse, of a jingling carriage, which stops before Philip's door. "It's the trap," says nurse Brandon, delighted. "It must be those kind Ringwoods," says Mrs. Philip. "But stop, Brandon. Did not they, did not we? — oh, how kind of them!" She was trying to recall the past. Past and present for days had been strangely mingled in her fevered brain. "Hush, my dear! you are to be kep' quite still," says the nurse — and then proceeded to finish the polishing and powdering of the pink frog on her lap.

The bed-room window was open towards the sunny street: but Mrs. Philip did not hear a female voice say, "'Old the 'orse's 'ead, Jim," or she might have been agitated. The horse's head was held, and a gentleman and a lady with a great basket containing pease, butter, greens, flowers, and other rural produce, descended from the vehicle and rang at the bell.

Philip opened it; with his little ones, as usual, trotting at his knees.

Digitized by Google

"Why, my darlings, how you air grown!" cries the lady.

"Bygones be bygones. Give us your 'and, Firmin: here 's mine. My missus has brought some country butter and things for your dear good lady. And we hope you liked the chickens. And God bless you, old fellow, how are you?" The tears were rolling down the good man's cheeks as he spoke. And Mrs. Mugford was likewise exceedingly hot, and very much affected. And the children said to her, "Mamma is better now: and we have a little brother, and he is crying now upstairs."

"Bless you, my darlings!" Mrs. Mugford was off by this time. She put down her peace-offering of carrots, chickens, bacon, butter. She cried plentifully. "It was Brandon came and told us," she said; "and when she told us how all your great people had flung you over, and you 'd been quarrelling again, you naughty fellar, I says to Mugford, 'Let 's go and see after that dear thing, Mugford,' I says. And here we are. And year 's two nice cakes for your children" (after a forage in the cornucopia), "and, lor', how they are grown!"

A little nurse from the upstairs regions here makes her appearance, holding a bundle of cashmere shawls, part of which is removed, and discloses a being pronounced to be ravishingly beautiful, and "jest like Mrs. Mugford's Emaly!"

"I say," says Mugford, "the old shop 's still open to you. T'other chap would n't do at all. He was wild when he got the drink on board. Hirish. Pitched into Bickerton, and black'd 'is eye. It was Bickerton who told you lies about that poor lady. Don't see 'im no more now. Borrowed some money of me; have n't seen him since. We were both wrong, and we must make it up — the missus says we must."

"Amen!" said Philip, with a grasp of the honest

Digitized by Google

fellow's hand. And next Sunday he and a trim little sister, and two children, went to an old church in Queen Square, Bloomsbury, which was fashionable in the reign of Queen Anne, when Richard Steele kept house, and did not pay rent, hard by. And when the clergyman in the Thanksgiving particularised those who desired now to "offer up their praises and thanksgiving for late mercies vouchsafed to them," once more Philip Firmin said "Amen," on his knees, and with all his heart.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER II

THE REALMS OF BLISS

YOU know — all good boys and girls at Christmas know — that, before the last scene of the pantomime, when the Good Fairy ascends in a blaze of glory, and Harlequin and Columbine take hands, having danced through all their tricks and troubles and tumbles, there is a dark, brief, seemingly meaningless, penultimate scene, in which the performers appear to grope about perplexed, whilst the music of bassoons and trombones, and the like, groans tragically. As the actors, with gestures of dismay and outstretched arms, move hither and thither, the wary frequenter of pantomimes sees the illuminators of the Abode of Bliss and Hall of Prismatic Splendour nimbly moving behind the canvas, and streaking the darkness with twinkling fires — fires which shall blaze out presently in a thousand colours round the Good Fairy in the Revolving Temple of Blinding Bliss. Be happy, Harlequin! Love and be happy and dance, pretty Columbine! Children, mamma bids you put your shawls on. And Jack and Mary (who are young and love pantomimes,) look lingeringly still over the ledge of the box, whilst the fairy temple yet revolves, whilst the fireworks play, and ere the Great Dark Curtain descends.

My dear young people, who have sat kindly through the scenes during which our entertainment has lasted, be it known to you that last chapter was the dark scene. Look to your cloaks, and tie up your little throats, for I tell you the great baize will soon fall down. Have I had

Digitized by Google

any secrets from you all through the piece? I tell you the house will be empty and you will be in the cold air. When the boxes have got their nightgowns on, and you are all gone, and I have turned off the gas, and am in the empty theatre alone in the darkness, I promise you I shall not be merry. Never mind! We can make jokes though we are ever so sad. We can jump over head and heels, though I declare the pit is half emptied already, and the last orange-woman has slunk away. Encore une pirouette, Colombine! Saute, Arlequin, mon ami! Though there are but five bars more of the music, my good people, we must jump over them briskly, and then go home to supper and bed.

Philip Firmin, then, was immensely moved by this magnanimity and kindness on the part of his old employer, and has always considered Mugford's arrival and friendliness as a special interposition in his favour. He owes it all to Brandon, he says. It was she who bethought herself of his condition, represented it to Mugford, and reconciled him to his enemy. Others were most ready with their money. It was Brandon who brought him work rather than alms, and enabled him to face fortune cheerfully. His interval of poverty was so short, that he actually had not occasion to borrow. A week more, and he could not have held out, and poor Brandon's little marriage present must have gone to the cenotaph of sovereigns — the dear Little Sister's gift which Philip's family cherish to this hour.

So Philip, with a humbled heart and demeanour, clambered up on his sub-editorial stool once more at the *Pall Mall Gazette*, and again brandished the paste-pot and the scissors. I forget whether Bickerton still remained in command at the *Pall Mall Gazette*, or was more kind to Philip than before, or was afraid of him,

Digitized by Google

having heard of his exploits as a fire-eater; but certain it is, the two did not come to a quarrel, giving each other a wide berth, as the saying is, and each doing his own duty. Good-by, Monsieur Bickerton. Except mayhap, in the final group, round the FAIRY CHARIOT (when, I promise you, there will be such a blaze of glory that he will be invisible), we shall never see the little spiteful envious creature more. Let him pop down his appointed trap-door; and, quick fiddles! let the brisk music jig on.

Owing to the coolness which had arisen between Philip and his father on account of their different views regarding the use to be made of Philip's signature, the old gentleman drew no further bills in his son's name, and our friend was spared from the unpleasant persecution. Mr. Hunt loved Dr. Firmin so ardently that he could not bear to be separated from the doctor long. Without the doctor, London was a dreary wilderness to Hunt. Unfortunate remembrances of past pecuniary transactions haunted him here. We were all of us glad when he finally retired from the Covent Garden taverns and betook himself to the Bowery once more.

And now friend Philip was at work again, hardly earning a scanty meal for self, wife, servant, children. It was indeed a meagre meal, and a small wage. Charlotte's illness, and other mishaps, had swept away poor Philip's little savings. It was determined that we would let the elegantly furnished apartments on the first floor. You might have fancied the proud Mr. Firmin rather repugnant to such a measure. And so he was on the score of convenience, but of dignity, not a whit. To this day, if necessity called, Philip would turn a mangle with perfect gravity. I believe the thought of Mrs. General Baynes's horror at the idea of her son-in-law letting lodgings greatly soothed and comforted Philip.

Digitized by Google

The lodgings were absolutely taken by our country acquaintance, Miss Pybus, who was coming up for the May meetings, and whom we persuaded (heaven be good to us) that she would find a most desirable quiet residence in the house of a man with three squalling children. Miss P. came, then, with my wife to look at the apartments; and we allured her by describing to her the delightful musical services at the Foundling hard by; and she was very much pleased with Mrs. Philip, and did not even wince at the elder children, whose pretty faces won the kind old lady's heart: and I am ashamed to say we were mum about the baby: and Pybus was going to close for the lodgings, when Philip burst out of his little room, without his coat, I believe, and objurgated a little printer's boy, who was sitting in the hall, waiting for some "copy" regarding which he had made a blunder; and Philip used such violent language towards the little lazy boy, that Pybus said "she never could think of taking apartments in that house," and hurried thence in a panic. When Brandon heard of this project of letting lodgings, she was in a fury. *She* might let lodgin's, but it was n't for Philip to do so. "Let lodgin's, indeed! Buy a broom, and sweep a crossin'!" Brandon always thought Charlotte a poor-spirited creature, and the way she scolded Mrs. Firmin about this transaction was not a little amusing. Charlotte was not angry. She liked the scheme as little as Brandon. No other person ever asked for lodgings in Charlotte's house. May and its meetings came to an end. The old ladies went back to their country towns. The missionaries returned to Caffraria. (Ah! where are the pleasant-looking Quakeresses of our youth, with their comely faces, and pretty dove-coloured robes? They say the goodly sect is dwindling—dwindling.) The Quakeresses went out of town: then the fashionable world began to move: the

Digitized by Google

Parliament went out of town. In a word, everybody who could, made away for a holiday, whilst poor Philip remained at his work, snipping and pasting his paragraphs, and doing his humble drudgery.

A sojourn on the sea-shore was prescribed by Dr. Goodenough, as absolutely necessary for Charlotte and her young ones, and when Philip pleaded certain cogent reasons why the family could not take the medicine prescribed by the doctor, that eccentric physician had recourse to the same pocket-book which we have known him to produce on a former occasion; and took from it, for what I know, some of the very same notes which he had formerly given to the Little Sister. "I suppose you may as well have them as that rascal Hunt?" said the Doctor, scowling very fiercely. "Don't tell *me*. Stuff and nonsense. Pooh! Pay me when you are a rich man!" And this Samaritan had jumped into his carriage, and was gone, before Philip or Mrs. Philip could say a word of thanks. Look at him as he is going off. See the green brougham drive away, and turn westward, and mark it well. A shoe go after thee, John Goodenough; we shall see thee no more in this story. You are not in the secret, good reader: but I, who have been living with certain people for many months past, and have a hearty liking for some of them, grow very soft when the hour for shaking hands comes, to think we are to meet no more. Go to! when this tale began, and for some months after, a pair of kind old eyes used to read these pages, which are now closed in the sleep appointed for all of us. And so page is turned after page, and behold Finis and the volume's end.

So Philip and his young folks came down to Periwinkle Bay, where we were staying, and the girls in the two families nursed the baby, and the child and mother

Digitized by Google

got health and comfort from the fresh air, and Mr. Mugford — who believes himself to be the finest sub-editor in the world, and I can tell you there is a great art in sub-editing a paper — Mr. Mugford, I say, took Philip's scissors and paste-pot, whilst the latter enjoyed his holiday. And J. J. Ridley, R.A., came and joined us presently, and we had many sketching parties, and my drawings of the various points about the bay, viz., Lobster Head, the Mollusc Rocks, &c. &c., are considered to be very spirited, though my little boy (who certainly has not his father's taste for art) mistook for the rock a really capital portrait of Philip, in a grey hat and pale-tot, sprawling on the sand.

Some twelve miles inland from the bay is the little town of Whipham Market, and Whipham skirts the park palings of that castle where Lord Ringwood had lived, and where Philip's mother was born and bred. There is a statue of the late lord in Whipham market-place. Could he have had his will, the borough would have continued to return two Members to Parliament, as in the good old times before us. In that ancient and grass-grown little place, where your footsteps echo as you pass through the street, where you hear distinctly the creaking of the sign of the "Ringwood Arms" hotel and posting-house, and the opposition creaking of the "Ram Inn" over the way — where the half-pay captain, the curate, and the medical man stand before the fly-blown window-blind of the "Ringwood Institute" and survey the strangers — there is still a respect felt for the memory of the great lord who dwelt behind the oaks in yonder hall. He had his faults. His lordship's life was not that of an anchorite. The company his lordship kept, especially in his latter days, was not of that select description which a nobleman of his lordship's rank might command. But he was a good friend to Whip-

Digitized by Google

ham. He was a good landlord to a good tenant. If he had his will, Whipham would have kept its own. His lordship paid half the expense after the burning of the town-hall. He was an arbitrary man, certainly, and he flogged Alderman Duffle before his own shop, but he apologised for it most handsome afterwards. Would the gentlemen like port or sherry? Claret not called for in Whipham; not at all: and no fish, because all the fish at Periwinkle Bay is bought up and goes to London. Such were the remarks made by the landlord of the "Ringwood Arms" to three cavaliers who entered that hostelry. And you may be sure he told us about Lord Ringwood's death in the postchaise as he came from Turreys Regum; and how his lordship went through them gates (pointing to a pair of gates and lodges which skirt the town), and was drove up to the castle and laid in state; and his lordship never would take the railway, never; and he always travelled like a nobleman, and when he came to a hotel and changed horses, he always called for a bottle of wine, and only took a glass, and sometimes not even that. And the present Sir John has kept no company here as yet; and they say he is close of his money, they say he is. And this is certain, Whipham have n't seen much of it, Whipham have n't.

We went into the inn-yard, which may have been once a stirring place, and then sauntered up to the park gate, surmounted by the supporters and armorial bearings of the Ringwoods. "I wonder whether my poor mother came out of that gate when she eloped with my father?" said Philip. "Poor thing, poor thing!" The great gates were shut. The westering sun cast shadows over the sward where here and there the deer were browsing, and at some mile distance lay the house, with its towers and porticos and vanes flaming in the sun.

Digitized by Google

The smaller gate was open, and a girl was standing by the lodge-door. Was the house to be seen?

"Yes," says a little red-cheeked girl, with a curtsey.

"No!" calls out a harsh voice from within, and an old woman comes out from the lodge and looks at us fiercely. "Nobody is to go to the house. The family is a-coming."

That was provoking. Philip would have liked to behold the great house where his mother and her ancestors were born.

"Marry, good dame," Philip's companion said to the old beldam, "this goodly gentleman hath a right of entrance to yonder castle, which, I trow, ye wot not of. Heard ye never tell of one Philip Ringwood, slain at Busaco's glorious fi——"

"Hold your tongue, and don't chaff her, Pen," growled Firmin.

"Nay, and she knows not Philip Ringwood's grandson," the other wag continued, in a softened tone, "this will convince her of our right to enter. Canst recognise this image of your queen?"

"Well, I suppose 'ee can go up," said the old woman at the sight of this talisman. "There 's only two of them staying there, and they 're out a-drivin'."

Philip was bent on seeing the halls of his ancestors. Grey and huge, with towers, and vanes, and porticos, they lay before us a mile off, separated from us by a streak of glistening river. A great chestnut avenue led up to the river, and in the dappled grass the deer were browsing.

You know the house of course. There is a picture of it in Watts, bearing date 1783. A gentleman in a cocked hat and pigtail is rowing a lady in a boat on the shining river. Another nobleman in a cocked hat is angling in the glistening river from the bridge, over which a postchaise is passing.

Digitized by Google

"Yes, the place is like enough," said Philip; "but I miss the postchaise going over the bridge, and the lady in the punt with the tall parasol. Don't you remember the print in our housekeeper's room in Old Parr Street? My poor mother used to tell me about the house, and I imagined it grander than the palace of Aladdin. It *is* a very handsome house," Philip went on. "'It extends two hundred and sixty feet by seventy-five, and consists of a rustic basement and principal story, with an attic in the centre, the whole executed in stone. The grand front towards the park is adorned with a noble portico of the Corinthian order, and may with propriety be considered one of the finest elevations in the ——.' I tell you I am quoting out of Watts's 'Seats of the Nobility and Gentry,' published by John and Josiah Boydell, and lying in our drawing-room. Ah, dear me! I painted the boat and the lady and gentleman in the drawing-room copy, and my father boxed my ears, and my mother cried out, poor dear soul! And this is the river, is it? And over this the postchaise went with the club-tailed horses, and here was the pig-tailed gentleman fishing. It gives me a queer sensation," says Philip, standing on the bridge, and stretching out his big arms. "Yes, there are the two people in the punt by the rushes. I can see them, but you can't; and I hope, sir, you will have good sport." And here he took off his hat to an imaginary gentleman supposed to be angling from the balustrade for ghostly gudgeon. We reach the house presently. We ring at the door in the basement under the portico. The porter demurs, and says some of the family is down, but they are out, to be sure. The same half-crown argument answers with him which persuaded the keeper at the lodge. We go through the show-rooms of the stately but somewhat faded and melancholy palace. In the cedar dining-room there hangs

Digitized by Google

the grim portrait of the late earl; and that fair-haired officer in red? that must be Philip's grandfather. And those two slim girls embracing, surely those are his mother and his aunt. Philip walks softly through the vacant rooms. He gives the porter a gold piece ere he goes out of the great hall, forty feet cube, ornamented with statues brought from Rome by John first Baron, namely, Heliogabalus, Nero's mother, a priestess of Isis, and a river god; the pictures over the doors by Pedimento; the ceiling by Leotardi, &c.; and in a window in the great hall there is a table with a visitors' book, in which Philip writes his name. As we went away, we met a carriage which drove rapidly towards the house, and which no doubt contained the members of the Ringwood family, regarding whom the porteress had spoken. After the family differences previously related, we did not care to face these kinsfolks of Philip, and passed on quickly in twilight beneath the rustling umbrage of the chestnuts. J. J. saw a hundred fine pictorial effects as we walked; the palace reflected in the water; the dappled deer under the chequered shadow of the trees. It was, "Oh, what a jolly bit of colour," and, "I say, look, how well that old woman's red cloak comes in!" and so forth. Painters never seem tired of their work. At seventy they are students still, patient, docile, happy. May we too, my good sir, live for fourscore years, and never be too old to learn! The walk, the brisk accompanying conversation, amid stately scenery around, brought us with good appetites and spirits to our inn, where we were told that dinner would be served when the omnibus arrived from the railway.

At a short distance from the "Ringwood Arms," and on the opposite side of the street, is the "Ram Inn," neat postchaises and farmers' ordinary; a house, of which the pretensions seemed less, though the trade was

Digitized by Google

somewhat more lively. When the tooting of the horn announced the arrival of the omnibus from the railway, I should think a crowd of at least fifteen people assembled at various doors of the High Street and Market. The half-pay captain and the curate came out from the "Ringwood Athenæum." The doctor's apprentice stood on the step of the surgery door, and the surgeon's lady looked out from the first floor. We shared the general curiosity. We and the waiter stood at the door of the "Ringwood Arms." We were mortified to see that of the five persons conveyed by the 'bus, one was a tradesman, who descended at his door, (Mr. Packwood, the saddler, so the waiter informed us,) three travellers were discharged at the "Ram," and only one came to us.

"Mostly bagmen goes to the 'Ram,'" the waiter said, with a scornful air; and these bagmen, and their bags, quitted the omnibus.

Only one passenger remained for the "Ringwood Arms Hotel," and he presently descended under the *porte cochère;* and the omnibus — I own, with regret, it was but a one-horse machine — drove rattling into the court-yard, where the bells of the "Star," the "George," the "Rodney," the "Dolphin," and so on, had once been wont to jingle, and the court had echoed with the noise and clatter of hoofs and ostlers, and the cries of "First and second, turn out."

Who was the merry-faced little gentleman in black, who got out of the omnibus, and cried, when he saw us, "What, *you* here?" It was Mr. Bradgate, that lawyer of Lord Ringwood's with whom we made a brief acquaintance just after his lordship's death. "What, *you* here?" cries Bradgate, then, to Philip. "Come down about this business, of course? Very glad that you and — and certain parties have made it up. Thought you were n't friends."

Digitized by Google

What business? What parties? We had not heard the news? We had only come over from Periwinkle Bay by chance, in order to see the house.

"How very singular! Did you meet the — the people who were staying there?"

We said we had seen a carriage pass, but did not remark who was in it. What, however, was the news? Well. It would be known immediately, and would appear in Tuesday's *Gazette*. The news was that Sir John Ringwood was going to take a peerage, and that the seat for Whipham would be vacant. And herewith our friend produced from his travelling bag a proclamation, which he read to us, and which was addressed —

"To the worthy and independent Electors of the Borough of Ringwood.

"LONDON, *Wednesday*.

"GENTLEMEN, — A gracious Sovereign having been pleased to order that the family of Ringwood should continue to be represented in the House of Peers, I take leave of my friends and constituents who have given me their kind confidence hitherto, and promise them that my regard for them will never cease, or my interest in the town and neighbourhood where my family have dwelt for many centuries. The late lamented Lord Ringwood's brother died in the service of his Sovereign in Portugal, following the same flag under which his ancestors for centuries have fought and bled. My own son serves the Crown in a civil capacity. It was natural that one of our name and family should continue the relations which so long have subsisted between us and this loyal, affectionate, but independent borough. Mr. Ringwood's onerous duties in the office which he holds are sufficient to occupy his time. A gentleman united to our family by the closest ties will offer himself as a candidate for your suffrages ——"

"Why, who is it? He is not going to put in uncle Twysden, or my sneak of a cousin?"

"No," says Mr. Bradgate.

Digitized by Google

"Well, bless my soul! he can't mean me," said Philip. "Who is the dark horse he has in his stable?"

Then Mr. Bradgate laughed. "Dark horse you may call him. The new Member is to be Grenville Woolcomb, Esq., your West India relative, and no other."

Those who know the extreme energy of Mr. P. Firmin's language when he is excited, may imagine the explosion of Philippine wrath which ensued as our friend heard this name. "That miscreant: that skinflint: that wealthy crossing-sweeper: that ignoramus who scarce could do more than sign his name! Oh, it was horrible, shameful! Why, the man is on such ill terms with his wife that they say he strikes her. When I see him I feel inclined to choke him, and murder him. *That* brute going into Parliament, and the republican Sir John Ringwood sending him there! It 's monstrous!"

"Family arrangements. Sir John, or, I should say, my Lord Ringwood, is one of the most affectionate of parents," Mr. Bradgate remarked. "He has a large family by his second marriage, and his estates go to his eldest son. We must not quarrel with Lord Ringwood for wishing to provide for his young ones. I don't say that he quite acts up to the extreme Liberal principle of which he was once rather fond of boasting. But if you were offered a peerage, what would you do; what would I do? If you wanted money for your young ones, and could get it, would you not take it? Come, come, don't let us have too much of this Spartan virtue! If we were tried, my good friend, we should not be much worse or better than our neighbours. Is my fly coming, waiter?" We asked Mr. Bradgate to defer his departure, and to share our dinner. But he declined, and said he must go up to the great house, where he and his client had plenty of business to arrange, and where no doubt he would stay for the night. He bade the inn

Digitized by Google

servants put his portmanteau into his carriage when it came. "The old lord had some famous port wine," he said; "I hope my friends have the key of the cellar."

The waiter was just putting our meal on the table, as we stood in the bow-window of the "Ringwood Arms" coffee-room, engaged in this colloquy. Hence we could see the street, and the opposition inn of the "Ram," where presently a great placard was posted. At least a dozen street-boys, shopmen, and rustics were quickly gathered round this manifesto, and we ourselves went out to examine it. The "Ram" placard denounced, in terms of unmeasured wrath, the impudent attempt from the Castle to dictate to the free and independent electors of the borough. Freemen were invited not to promise their votes; to show themselves worthy of their name; to submit to no Castle dictation. A county gentleman of property, of influence, of liberal principles — no WEST INDIAN, no CASTLE FLUNKEY, but a TRUE ENGLISH GENTLEMAN, would come forward to rescue them from the tyranny under which they laboured. On this point the electors might rely on the word of A BRITON.

"This was brought down by the clerk from Bedloe's. He and a newspaper man came down in the train with me; a Mr. ——."

As he spoke, there came forth from the "Ram" the newspaper man of whom Mr. Bradgate spoke — an old friend and comrade of Philip, that energetic man and able reporter, Phipps of the *Daily Intelligencer*, who recognised Philip, and cordially greeting him, asked what *he* did down here, and supposed he had come to support his family.

Philip explained that we were strangers, had come from a neighbouring watering-place to see the home of Philip's ancestors, and were not even aware, until then,

Digitized by Google

that an electioneering contest was pending in the place, or that Sir John Ringwood was about to be promoted to the peerage. Meanwhile Mr. Bradgate's fly had driven out of the hotel yard of the "Ringwood Arms," and the lawyer running to the house for a bag of papers, jumped into the carriage and called to the coachman to drive to the Castle.

"*Bon appétit!*" says he, in a confident tone, and he was gone.

"Would Phipps dine with us?" Phipps whispered, "I am on the other side, and the 'Ram' is our house."

We, who were on no side, entered into the "Ringwood Arms," and sat down to our meal — to the mutton and the catsup, cauliflower and potatoes, the copper-edged side-dishes, and the watery melted butter, with which strangers are regaled in inns in declining towns. The town *badauds*, who had read the placard at the "Ram," now came to peruse the proclamation in our window. I dare say thirty pairs of clinking boots stopped before the one window and the other, the while we ate tough mutton and drank fiery sherry. And J. J., leaving his dinner, sketched some of the figures of the townsfolk staring at the manifesto, with the old-fashioned "Ram Inn" for a background — a picturesque gable enough.

Our meal was just over, when, somewhat to our surprise, our friend Mr. Bradgate the lawyer returned to the "Ringwood Arms." He wore a disturbed countenance. He asked what he could have for dinner? Mutton, neither hot nor cold. Hum! That must do. So he had not been invited to dine at the Park? We rallied him with much facetiousness on this disappointment.

Little Bradgate's eyes started with wrath. "What a churl the little black fellow is!" he cried. "I took him his papers. I talked with him till dinner was laid in the very room where we were. French beans and neck

Digitized by Google

of venison — I saw the housekeeper and his man bring them in! And Mr. Woolcomb did not so much as ask me to sit down to dinner — but told me to come again at nine o'clock! Confound this mutton — it 's neither hot nor cold! The little skinflint!" The glasses of fiery sherry which Bradgate now swallowed served rather to choke than appease the lawyer. We laughed, and this jocularity angered him more. "Oh," said he, "I am not the only person Woolcomb was rude to. He was in a dreadful ill temper. He abused his wife: and when he read somebody's name in the strangers' book, I promise you, Firmin, he abused *you*. I had a mind to say to him, 'Sir, Mr. Firmin is dining at the "Ringwood Arms," and I will tell him what you say of him.' What india-rubber mutton this is! What villanous sherry! Go back to him at nine o'clock, indeed! Be hanged to his impudence!"

"You must not abuse Woolcomb before Firmin," said one of our party. "Philip is so fond of his cousin's husband, that he cannot bear to hear the black man abused."

This was not a very brilliant joke, but Philip grinned at it with much savage satisfaction.

"Hit Woolcomb as hard as you please, he has no friends here, Mr. Bradgate," growled Philip. "So he is rude to his lawyer, is he?"

"I tell you he is worse than the old earl," cried the indignant Bradgate. "At least the old man was a peer of England, and could be a gentleman when he wished. But to be bullied by a fellow who might be a black footman, or ought to be sweeping a crossing! It's monstrous!"

"Don't speak ill of a man and a brother, Mr. Bradgate. Woolcomb can't help his complexion."

"But he can help his confounded impudence, and shan't practise it on *me!*" the attorney cried.

Digitized by Google

As Bradgate called out from his box, puffing and fuming, friend J. J. was scribbling in the little sketch-book which he always carried. He smiled over his work. "I know," he said, "the Black Prince well enough. I have often seen him driving his chestnut mares in the Park, with that bewildered white wife by his side. I am sure that woman is miserable, and, poor thing ——"

"Serve her right! What did an English lady mean by marrying such a fellow!" cries Bradgate.

"A fellow who does not ask his lawyer to dinner!" remarks one of the company; perhaps the reader's very humble servant. "But what an imprudent lawyer he has chosen — a lawyer who speaks his mind."

"I have spoken my mind to his betters, and be hanged to him! Do you think I am going to be afraid of *him?*" bawls the irascible solicitor.

"*Contempsi Catilinæ gladios* — do you remember the old quotation at school, Philip?" And here there was a break in our conversation, for chancing to look at friend J. J.'s sketch-book, we saw that he had made a wonderful little drawing, representing Woolcomb and Woolcomb's wife, grooms, phaeton, and chestnut mares, as they were to be seen any afternoon in Hyde Park, during the London season.

Admirable! Capital! Everybody at once knew the likeness of the dusky charioteer. Iracundus himself smiled and sniggered over it. "Unless you behave yourself, Mr. Bradgate, Ridley will make a picture of *you*," says Philip. Bradgate made a comical face, and retreated into his box, of which he pretended to draw the curtain. But the sociable little man did not long remain in his retirement; he emerged from it in a short time, his wine decanter in his hand, and joined our little party; and then we fell to talking of old

Digitized by Google

times; and we all remembered a famous drawing by H. B., of the late Earl of Ringwood, in the old-fashioned swallow-tailed coat and tight trousers, on the old-fashioned horse, with the old-fashioned groom behind him, as he used to be seen pounding along Rotten Row.

"I speak my mind, do I?" says Mr. Bradgate, presently. "I know somebody who spoke *his* mind to that old man, and who would have been better off if he had held his tongue."

"Come, tell me, Bradgate," cried Philip. "It is all over and past now. Had Lord Ringwood left me something? I declare I thought at one time that he intended to do so."

"Nay, has not your friend here been rebuking me for speaking my mind? I am going to be as mum as a mouse. Let us talk about the election," and the provoking lawyer would say no more on a subject possessing a dismal interest for poor Phil.

"I have no more right to repine," said that philosopher, "than a man would have who drew number x in the lottery, when the winning ticket was number y. Let us talk, as you say, about the election. Who is to oppose Mr. Woolcomb?"

Mr. Bradgate believed a neighbouring squire, Mr. Hornblow, was to be the candidate put forward against the Ringwood nominee.

"Hornblow! what, Hornblow of Grey Friars?" cries Philip. "A better fellow never lived. In this case he shall have our vote and interest; and I think we ought to go over and take another dinner at the 'Ram.'"

The new candidate actually turned out to be Philip's old school and college friend, Mr. Hornblow. After dinner we met him with a staff of canvassers on the tramp through the little town. Mr. Hornblow was

Digitized by Google

paying his respects to such tradesmen as had their shops yet open. Next day being market-day, he proposed to canvass the market-people. "If I meet the black man, Firmin," said the burly squire, "I think I can chaff him off his legs. He is a bad one at speaking, I am told."

As if the tongue of Plato would have prevailed in Whipham and against the nominee of the great house! The hour was late to be sure, but the companions of Mr. Hornblow on his canvass augured ill of his success after half-an-hour's walk at his heels. Baker Jones would not promise no how: that meant Jones would vote for the Castle, Mr. Hornblow's legal aide-de-camp, Mr. Batley, was forced to allow. Butcher Brown was having his tea, — his shrill-voiced wife told us, looking out from her glazed back parlour: Brown would vote for the Castle. Saddler Briggs would see about it. Grocer Adams fairly said he would vote against us — against *us?* — against Hornblow, whose part we were taking already. I fear the flattering promises of support of a great body of free and unbiassed electors, which had induced Mr. Hornblow to come forward and, &c., were but inventions of that little lawyer, Batley, who found his account in having a contest in the borough. When the polling-day came — you see, I disdain to make any mysteries in this simple and veracious story — MR. GRENVILLE WOOLCOMB, whose solicitor and agent spoke for him — Mr. Grenville Woolcomb, who could not spell or speak two sentences of decent English, and whose character for dulness, ferocity, penuriousness, jealousy, almost fatuity, was notorious to all the world — was returned by an immense majority, and the country gentleman brought scarce a hundred votes to the poll.

We who were in nowise engaged in the contest, never-

Digitized by Google

theless found amusement from it in a quiet country place where little else was stirring. We came over once or twice from Periwinkle Bay. We mounted Hornblow's colours openly. We drove up ostentatiously to the "Ram," forsaking the "Ringwood Arms," where MR. GRENVILLE WOOLCOMB'S COMMITTEE ROOM was now established in that very coffee-room where we had dined in Mr. Bradgate's company. We warmed in the contest. We met Bradgate and his principal more than once, and our Montagus and Capulets defied each other in the public street. It was fine to see Philip's great figure and noble scowl when he met Woolcomb at the canvass. Gleams of mulatto hate quivered from the eyes of the little captain. Darts of fire flashed from beneath Philip's eyebrows as he elbowed his way forward, and hustled Woolcomb off the pavement. Mr. Philip never disguised any sentiment of his. "Hate the little ignorant, spiteful, vulgar, avaricious beast? Of course I hate him, and I should like to pitch him into the river." "Oh, Philip!" Charlotte pleaded. But there was no reasoning with this savage when in wrath. I deplored, though perhaps I was amused by, his ferocity.

The local paper on our side was filled with withering epigrams against this poor Woolcomb, of which, I suspect, Philip was the author. I think I know that fierce style and tremendous invective. In the man whom he hates he can see no good: and in his friend no fault. When we met Bradgate apart from his principal, we were friendly enough. He said we had no chance in the contest. He did not conceal his dislike and contempt for his client. He amused us in later days (when he actually became Philip's man of law) by recounting anecdotes of Woolcomb, his fury, his jealousy, his avarice, his brutal behaviour. Poor Agnes had married for money, and he gave her none. Old Twys-

Digitized by Google

den, in giving his daughter to this man, had hoped to have the run of a fine house; to ride in Woolcomb's carriages, and feast at his table. But Woolcomb was so stingy that he grudged the meat which his wife ate, and would give none to her relations. He turned those relations out of his doors. Talbot and Ringwood Twysden, he drove them both away. He lost a child, because he would not send for a physician. His wife never forgave him that meanness. Her hatred for him became open and avowed. They parted, and she led a life into which we will look no farther. She quarrelled with parents as well as husband. "Why," she said, "did they sell me to that man?" Why did she sell herself? She required little persuasion from father and mother when she committed that crime. To be sure, they had educated her so well to worldliness, that when the occasion came she was ready.

We used to see this luckless woman, with her horses and servants decked with Woolcomb's ribbons, driving about the little town, and making feeble efforts to canvass the townspeople. They all knew how she and her husband quarrelled. Reports came very quickly from the Hall to the town. Woolcomb had not been at Whipham a week when people began to hoot and jeer at him as he passed in his carriage. "Think how weak you must be," Bradgate said, "when we can win with this horse! I wish he would stay away, though. We could manage much better without him. He has insulted I don't know how many free and independent electors, and infuriated others, because he will not give them beer when they come to the house. If Woolcomb would stay in the place, and we could have the election next year, I think your man might win. But, as it is, he may as well give in, and spare the expense of a poll." Meanwhile Hornblow was very confident. We believe

Digitized by Google

what we wish to believe. It is marvellous what faith an enthusiastic electioneering agent can inspire in his client. At any rate, if Hornblow did not win this time, he would at the next election. The old Ringwood domination in Whipham was gone henceforth for ever.

When the day of election arrived, you may be sure we came over from Periwinkle Bay to see the battle. By this time Philip had grown so enthusiastic in Hornblow's cause — (Philip, by the way, never would allow the possibility of a defeat) — that he had his children decked in the Hornblow ribbons, and drove from the bay, wearing a cockade as large as a pancake. He, I, and Ridley the painter, went together in a dog-cart. We were hopeful, though we knew the enemy was strong; and cheerful, though, ere we had driven five miles, the rain began to fall.

Philip was very anxious about a certain great roll of paper which we carried with us. When I asked him what it contained, he said it was a gun; which was absurd. Ridley smiled in his silent way. When the rain came, Philip cast a cloak over his artillery, and sheltered his powder. We little guessed at the time what strange game his shot would bring down.

When we reached Whipham, the polling had continued for some hours. The confounded black miscreant, as Philip called his cousin's husband, was at the head of the poll, and with every hour his majority increased. The free and independent electors did not seem to be in the least influenced by Philip's articles in the county paper, or by the placards which our side had pasted over the little town, and in which freemen were called upon to do their duty, to support a fine old English gentleman, to submit to no Castle nominee, and so forth. The pressure of the Ringwood steward and bailiffs was too strong. However much they disliked the black man,

Digitized by Google

tradesman after tradesman, and tenant after tenant, came up to vote for him. Our drums and trumpets at the "Ram" blew loud defiance to the brass band at the "Ringwood Arms." From our balcony, I flatter myself, we made much finer speeches than the Ringwood people could deliver. Hornblow was a popular man in the county. When he came forward to speak, the market-place echoed with applause. The farmers and small tradesmen touched their hats to him kindly, but slunk off sadly to the polling-booth, and voted according to order. A fine, healthy, handsome, red-cheeked squire, our champion's personal appearance enlisted all the ladies in his favour.

"If the two men," bawled Philip, from the "Ram" window, "could decide the contest with their coats off before the market-house yonder, which do you think would win — the fair man or the darkey?" (Loud cries of "Hornblow for iver!" or "Mr. Philip, we'll have *yew*.") "But you see, my friends, Mr. Woolcomb does not like a *fair* fight. Why does n't he show at the 'Ringwood Arms,' and speak? I don't believe he can speak — not English. Are you men? Are you Englishmen? Are you white slaves to be sold to that fellow?" (Immense uproar. Mr. Finch, the Ringwood agent, in vain tries to get a hearing from the balcony of the "Ringwood Arms.") "Why does not Sir John Ringwood — my Lord Ringwood now — come down amongst his tenantry, and back the man he has sent down? I suppose he is ashamed to look his tenants in the face. I should be, if I ordered them to do such a degrading job. You know, gentlemen, that I am a Ringwood myself. My grandfather lies buried — no, not buried — in yonder church. His tomb is there. His body lies on the glorious field of Busaco!" ("Hurray!") "I am a Ringwood," (Cries of "Hoo — down. No Ringwoods year. We

Digitized by Google

wunt have un!") "And before George, if I had a vote, I would give it for the gallant, the good, the admirable, the excellent Hornblow. Some one holds up the state of the poll, and Woolcomb is ahead! I can only say, electors of Whipham, *the more shame for you!*" "Hooray! Bravo!" The boys, the people, the shouting, are all on our side. The voting, I regret to say, steadily continues in favour of the enemy.

As Philip was making his speech, an immense banging of drums and blowing of trumpets arose from the balcony of the "Ringwood Arms," and a something resembling the song of triumph called, "See the Conquering Hero comes," was performed by the opposition orchestra. The lodge-gates of the park were now decorated with the Ringwood and Woolcomb flags. They were flung open, and a dark green chariot with four grey horses issued from the park. On the chariot was an earl's coronet, and the people looked rather scared as it came towards us, and said — "Do 'ee look, now, 't is my lard's own postchaise!" On former days Mr. Woolcomb, and his wife as his aide-de-camp, had driven through the town in an open barouche, but, to-day being rainy, preferred the shelter of the old chariot, and we saw, presently, within, Mr. Bradgate, the London agent, and by his side the darkling figure of Mr. Woolcomb. He had passed many agonising hours, we were told subsequently, in attempting to learn a speech. He cried over it. He never could get it by heart. He swore like a frantic child at his wife who endeavoured to teach him his lesson.

"Now's the time, Mr. Briggs!" Philip said to Mr. B., our lawyer's clerk, and the intelligent Briggs sprang downstairs to obey his orders. Clear the road there! make way! was heard from the crowd below us. The gates of our inn courtyard, which had been closed, were suddenly flung open, and, amidst the roar of the multi-

Digitized by Google

tude, there issued out a cart drawn by two donkeys, and driven by a negro, beasts and man all wearing Woolcomb's colours. In the cart was fixed a placard, on which a most undeniable likeness of Mr. Woolcomb was designed: who was made to say, "VOTE FOR ME! AM I NOT A MAN AND A BRUDDER?" This cart trotted out of the yard of the "Ram," and, with a cortège of shouting boys, advanced into the market-place, which Mr. Woolcomb's carriage was then crossing.

Before the market-house stands the statue of the late earl, whereof mention has been made. In his peer's robes, a hand extended, he points towards his park gates. An inscription, not more mendacious than many other epigraphs, records his rank, age, virtues, and the esteem in which the people of Whipham held him. The mulatto who drove the team of donkeys was an itinerant tradesman who brought fish from the bay to the little town; a jolly wag, a fellow of indifferent character, a frequenter of all the ale-houses in the neighbourhood. and rather celebrated for his skill as a bruiser. He and his steeds streamed with Woolcomb ribbons. With ironical shouts of "Woolcomb for ever!" Yellow Jack urged his cart towards the chariot with the white horses. He took off his hat with mock respect to the candidate sitting within the green chariot. From the balcony of the "Ram" we could see the two vehicles approaching each other; and Yellow Jack waving his ribboned hat, kicking his bandy legs here and there, and urging on his donkeys. What with the roar of the people, and the banging and trumpeting of the rival bands, we could hear but little: but I saw Woolcomb thrust his yellow head out of his chaise-window — he pointed towards that impudent donkey-cart, and urged, seemingly, his postilions to ride it down. Plying their whips, the postboys galloped towards Yellow Jack and his vehicle, a yelling crowd scattering

Digitized by Google

from before the horses, and rallying behind them, to utter execrations at Woolcomb. His horses were frightened, no doubt; for just as Yellow Jack wheeled nimbly round one side of the Ringwood statue, Woolcomb's horses were all huddled together and plunging in confusion beside it, the fore-wheel came in abrupt collision with the stonework of the statue railing: and then we saw the vehicle turn over altogether, one of the wheelers down with its rider, and the leaders kicking, plunging, lashing out right and left, wild and maddened with fear. Mr. Philip's countenance, I am bound to say, wore a most guilty and queer expression. This accident, this collision, this injury, perhaps death of Woolcomb and his lawyer, arose out of our fine joke about the Man and the Brother.

We dashed down the stairs from the "Ram"—Hornblow, Philip, and half-a-dozen more — and made a way through the crowd towards the carriage, with its prostrate occupants. The mob made way civilly for the popular candidate — the losing candidate. When we reached the chaise, the traces had been cut: the horses were free: the fallen postilion was up and rubbing his leg: and, as soon as the wheelers were taken out of the chaise, Woolcomb emerged from it. He had said from within (accompanying his speech with many oaths, which need not be repeated, and showing a just sense of his danger), "Cut the traces, hang you! And take the horses away: I can wait until they're gone. I'm sittin' on my lawyer; I ain't goin' to have *my* head kicked off by those wheelers." And just as we reached the fallen postchaise he emerged from it, laughing and saying, "Lie still, you old beggar!" to Mr. Bradgate, who was writhing underneath him. His issue from the carriage was received with shouts of laughter, which increased prodigiously when Yellow Jack, nimbly clam-

Digitized by Google

bering up the statue-railings, thrust the outstretched arm of the statue through the picture of the Man and the Brother, and left that cartoon flapping in the air over Woolcomb's head.

Then a shout arose, the like of which has seldom been heard in that quiet little town. Then Woolcomb, who had been quite good-humoured as he issued out of the broken postchaise, began to shriek, curse, and revile more shrilly than before; and was heard, in the midst of his oaths, and wrath, to say, "He would give any man a shillin' who would bring him down that confounded thing!" Then scared, bruised, contused, confused, poor Mr. Bradgate came out of the carriage, his employer taking not the least notice of him.

Hornblow hoped Woolcomb was not hurt, on which the little gentleman turned round and said, "Hurt? no; who are you? Is no fellah goin' to bring me down that confounded thing? I'll give a shillin', I say, to the fellah who does!"

"A shilling is offered for that picture!" shouts Philip with a red face, and wild with excitement. "Who will take a whole shilling for that beauty?"

On which Woolcomb began to scream, curse, and revile more bitterly than before. "You here? Hang you, why are you here? Don't come bullyin' me. Take that fellah away, some of you fellahs. Bradgate, come to my committee-room. I won't stay here, I say. Let's have the beast of a carriage, and ——— Well, what's up now?"

While he was talking, shrieking, and swearing, half-a-dozen shoulders in the crowd had raised the carriage up on its three wheels. The panel which had fallen towards the ground had split against a stone, and a great gap was seen in the side. A lad was about to thrust his hand into the orifice, when Woolcomb turned upon him.

Digitized by Google

"Hands off, you little beggar!" he cried, "no priggin'! Drive away some of these fellahs, you postboys! Don't stand rubbin' your knee there, you great fool. What's this?" and he thrusts his own hand into the place where the boy had just been marauding.

In the old travelling carriages there used to be a well or swordcase, in which travellers used to put swords and pistols in days when such weapons of defence were needful on the road. Out of this swordcase of Lord Ringwood's old post-chariot, Woolcomb did not draw a sword, but a foolscap paper folded and tied with a red tape. And he began to read the superscription — "Will of the Right Honourable John, Earl of Ringwood. Bradgate, Smith and Burrows."

"God bless my soul! It's the will he had back from my office, and which I thought he had destroyed. My dear fellow, I congratulate you with all my heart!" And herewith Mr. Bradgate the lawyer began to shake Philip's hand with much warmth. "Allow me to look at that paper. Yes, this is my handwriting. Let us come into the 'Ringwood Arms'— the 'Ram'— anywhere, and read it to you!"

. . . Here we looked up to the balcony of the "Ringwood Arms," and beheld a great placard announcing the state of the poll at 1 o'clock.

WOOLCOMB	216
HORNBLOW	92

"We are beaten," said Mr. Hornblow, very good-naturedly. "We may take our flag down. Mr. Woolcomb, I congratulate you."

"I knew we should do it," said Mr. Woolcomb, putting out a little yellow-kidded hand. "Had all the votes beforehand — knew we should do the trick, I say. Hi! you — What-do-you-call 'im — Bradgate! What

Digitized by Google

is it about, that will? It does not do any good to *that* beggar, does it?" and with laughter and shouts, and cries of "Woolcomb for ever," and "Give us something to drink, your honour," the successful candidate marched into his hotel.

And was the tawny Woolcomb the fairy who was to rescue Philip from grief, debt, and poverty? Yes. And the old postchaise of the late Lord Ringwood was the fairy chariot. You have read in a past chapter how the old lord, being transported with anger against Philip, desired his lawyer to bring back a will in which he had left a handsome legacy to the young man, as his mother's son. My lord had intended to make a provision for Mrs. Firmin, when she was his dutiful niece, and yet under his roof. When she eloped with Mr. Firmin, Lord Ringwood vowed he would give his niece nothing. But he was pleased with the independent and forgiving spirit exhibited by her son; and, being a person of much grim humour, I dare say chuckled inwardly at thinking how furious the Twysdens would be, when they found Philip was the old lord's favourite. Then Mr. Philip chose to be insubordinate, and to excite the wrath of his great-uncle, who desired to have his will back again. He put the document into his carriage, in the secret box, as he drove away on that last journey, in the midst of which death seized him. Had he survived, would he have made another will, leaving out all mention of Philip? Who shall say? My lord made and cancelled many wills. This certainly, duly drawn and witnessed, was the last he ever signed; and by it Philip is put in possession of a sum of money which is sufficient to ensure a provision for those whom he loves. Kind readers, I know not whether the fairies be rife now, or banished from this work-a-day earth, but Philip's biog-

Digitized by Google

rapher wishes you some of those blessings which never forsook Philip in his trials: a dear wife and children to love you, a true friend or two to stand by you, and in health or sickness a clear conscience, and a kindly heart. If you fall upon the way, may succour reach you. And may you, in your turn, have help and pity in store for the unfortunate whom you overtake on life's journey.

Would you care to know what happened to the other personages of our narrative? Old Twysden is still babbling and bragging at clubs, and though aged is not the least venerable. He has quarrelled with his son for not calling Woolcomb out, when that unhappy difference arose between the Black Prince and his wife. He says his family has been treated with cruel injustice by the late Lord Ringwood, but as soon as Philip had a little fortune left him he instantly was reconciled to his wife's nephew. There are other friends of Firmin's who were kind enough to him in his evil days, but cannot pardon his prosperity. Being in that benevolent mood which must accompany any leave-taking, we will not name these ill-wishers of Philip, but wish that all readers of his story may have like reason to make some of their acquaintances angry.

Our dear Little Sister would never live with Philip and his Charlotte, though the latter *especially* and with all her heart besought Mrs. Brandon to come to them. That pure and useful and modest life ended a few years since. She died of a fever caught from one of her patients. She would not allow Philip or Charlotte to come near her. She said she was justly punished for being so proud as to refuse to live with them. All her little store she left to Philip. He has now in his desk the five guineas which she gave him at his marriage; and J. J. has made a little picture of her, with her sad smile and her sweet face, which hangs in Philip's draw-

Digitized by Google

ing-room, where father, mother, and children talk of the Little Sister as though she were among them still.

She was dreadfully agitated when the news came from New York of Doctor Firmin's second marriage. "His second? His third?" she said. "The villain, the villain!" That strange delusion which we have described as sometimes possessing her increased in intensity after this news. More than ever, she believed that Philip was her own child. She came wildly to him, and cried that his father had forsaken them. It was only when she was excited that she gave utterance to this opinion. Doctor Goodenough says that though generally silent about it, it never left her.

Upon his marriage Dr. Firmin wrote one of his long letters to his son, announcing the event. He described the wealth of the lady (a widow from Norfolk, in Virginia) to whom he was about to be united. He would pay back, ay, with interest, every pound, every dollar, every cent he owed his son. Was the lady wealthy? We had only the poor doctor's word.

Three months after his marriage he died of yellow fever, on his wife's estate. It was then the Little Sister came to see us in widow's mourning, very wild and flushed. She bade our servant say, "Mrs. Firmin was at the door;" to the astonishment of the man, who knew her. She had even caused a mourning-card to be printed. Ah, there is rest now for that little fevered brain, and peace, let us pray, for that fond faithful heart.

The mothers in Philip's household and mine have already made a match between our children. We had a great gathering the other day at Roehampton, at the house of our friend, Mr. Clive Newcome (whose tall boy, my wife says, was very attentive to our Helen), and, having been educated at the same school, we sat ever so long at dessert, telling old stories, whilst the children

Digitized by Google

danced to piano music on the lawn. Dance on the lawn, young folks, whilst the elders talk in the shade! What? The night is falling: we have talked enough over our wine: and it is time to go home? Good night. Good night, friends, old and young! The night will fall: the stories must end: and the best friends must part.

THE END

Digitized by Google

CATHERINE: A STORY

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

CATHERINE

A STORY

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCING TO THE READER THE CHIEF PERSONAGES OF THIS NARRATIVE

AT that famous period of history, when the seventeenth century (after a deal of quarrelling, king-killing, reforming, republicanizing, restoring, re-restoring, play-writing, sermon-writing, Oliver-Cromwellizing, Stuartizing, and Orangizing, to be sure) had sunk into its grave, giving place to the lusty eighteenth; when Mr. Isaac Newton was a tutor of Trinity, and Mr. Joseph Addison Commissioner of Appeals; when the presiding genius that watched over the destinies of the French nation had played out all the best cards in his hand, and his adversaries began to pour in their trumps; when there were two kings in Spain employed perpetually in running away from one another; when there was a queen in England, with such rogues for Ministers as have never been seen, no, not in our own day; and a General, of whom it may be severely argued, whether he was the meanest miser or the greatest hero in the world; when Mrs. Masham had not yet put Madam Marlborough's nose out of joint; when people had their ears cut off for writing very meek political

Digitized by Google

pamphlets; and very large full-bottomed wigs were just beginning to be worn with powder; and the face of Louis the Great, as his was handed in to him behind the bed-curtains, was, when issuing thence, observed to look longer, older, and more dismal daily. . . .

About the year One thousand seven hundred and five, that is, in the glorious reign of Queen Anne, there existed certain characters, and befell a series of adventures, which, since they are strictly in accordance with the present fashionable style and taste; since they have been already partly described in the "Newgate Calendar;" since they are (as shall be seen anon) agreeably low, delightfully disgusting, and at the same time eminently pleasing and pathetic, may properly be set down here.

And though it may be said, with some considerable show of reason, that agreeably low and delightfully disgusting characters have already been treated, both copiously and ably, by some eminent writers of the present (and, indeed, of future) ages; though to tread in the footsteps of the immortal FAGIN requires a genius of inordinate stride, and to go a-robbing after the late though deathless TURPIN, the renowned JACK SHEPPARD, or the embryo DUVAL, may be impossible, and not an infringement, but a wasteful indication of ill-will towards the eighth commandment; though it may, on the one hand, be asserted that only vain coxcombs would dare to write on subjects already described by men really and deservedly eminent; on the other hand, that these subjects have been described so fully, that nothing more can be said about them; on the third hand (allowing, for the sake of argument, three hands to one figure of speech), that the public has heard so much of them, as to be quite tired of rogues, thieves, cut-throats, and Newgate altogether; — though all these

Digitized by Google

objections may be urged, and each is excellent, yet we intend to take a few more pages from the "Old Bailey Calendar," to bless the public with one more draught from the Stone Jug:[1]—yet awhile to listen, hurdle-mounted, and riding down the Oxford Road, to the bland conversation of Jack Ketch, and to hang with him round the neck of his patient, at the end of our and his history. We give the reader fair notice, that we shall tickle him with a few such scenes of villany, throat-cutting, and bodily suffering in general, as are not to be found, no, not in ——; never mind comparisons, for such are odious.

In the year 1705, then, whether it was that the Queen of England did feel seriously alarmed at the notice that a French prince should occupy the Spanish throne; or whether she was tenderly attached to the Emperor of Germany; or whether she was obliged to fight out the quarrel of William of Orange, who made us pay and fight for his Dutch provinces; or whether poor old Louis Quatorze did really frighten her; or whether Sarah Jennings and her husband wanted to make a fight, knowing how much they should gain by it;—whatever the reason was, it was evident that the war was to continue, and there was almost as much soldiering and recruiting, parading, pike and gun-exercising, flag-flying, drum-beating, powder-blazing, and military enthusiasm, as we can all remember in the year 1801, what time the Corsican upstart menaced our shores. A recruiting-party and captain of Cutts's regiment (which had been so mangled at Blenheim the year before,) were now in Warwickshire; and having their depôt at Warwick, the captain and his attendant, the corporal, were used to travel through the country, seek-

[1] This, as your ladyship is aware, is the polite name for her Majesty's prison of Newgate.

Digitized by Google

ing for heroes to fill up the gaps in Cutts's corps, — and for adventures to pass away the weary time of a country life.

Our Captain Plume and Sergeant Kite (it was at this time, by the way, that those famous recruiting-officers were playing their pranks in Shrewsbury,) were occupied very much in the same manner with Farquhar's heroes. They roamed from Warwick to Stratford, and from Stratford to Birmingham, persuading the swains of Warwickshire to leave the plough for the pike, and despatching, from time to time, small detachments of recruits to extend Marlborough's lines, and to act as food for the hungry cannon at Ramillies and Malplaquet.

Of those two gentlemen who are about to act a very important part in our history, one only was probably a native of Britain, — we say probably, because the individual in question was himself quite uncertain, and, it must be added, entirely indifferent about his birthplace; but speaking the English language, and having been during the course of his life pretty generally engaged in the British service, he had a tolerably fair claim to the majestic title of Briton. His name was Peter Brock, otherwise Corporal Brock, of Lord Cutts's regiment of dragoons; he was of age about fifty-seven (even that point has never been ascertained); in height, about five feet six inches; in weight, nearly thirteen stone; with a chest that the celebrated Leitch himself might envy; an arm, that was like an opera-dancer's leg; a stomach so elastic that it would accommodate itself to any given or stolen quantity of food; a great aptitude for strong liquors; a considerable skill in singing *chansons de table* of not the most delicate kind; he was a lover of jokes, of which he made many, and passably bad; when pleased, simply coarse, boisterous, and jovial; when angry, a perfect demon: bullying, cursing, storming, fighting, as

Digitized by Google

is sometimes the wont with gentlemen of his cloth and education.

Mr. Brock was strictly, what the Marquis of Rodil styled himself in a proclamation to his soldiers after running away, a *hijo de la guerra* — a child of war. Not seven cities, but one or two regiments, might contend for the honour of giving him birth: for his mother, whose name he took, had acted as camp-follower to a Royalist regiment; had then obeyed the Parliamentarians; died in Scotland when Monk was commanding in that country; and the first appearance of Mr. Brock in a public capacity displayed him as a fifer in the General's own regiment of Coldstreamers, when they marched from Scotland to London, and from a republic at once into a monarchy. Since that period, Brock had been always with the army; he had had, too, some promotion, for he spake of having a command at the battle of the Boyne; though probably (as he never mentioned the fact) upon the losing side. The very year before this narrative commences, he had been one of Mordaunt's forlorn hope at Schellenberg, for which service he was promised a pair of colours; he lost them, however, and was almost shot (but fate did not ordain that his career should close in that way) for drunkenness and insubordination immediately after the battle; but having in some measure reinstated himself by a display of much gallantry at Blenheim, it was found advisable to send him to England for the purpose of recruiting, and remove him altogether from the regiment, where his gallantry only rendered the example of his riot more dangerous.

Mr. Brock's commander was a slim young gentleman of twenty-six, about whom there was likewise a history, if one would take the trouble to inquire. He was a Bavarian by birth (his mother being an English lady), and

Digitized by Google

enjoyed along with a dozen other brothers the title of count: eleven of these, of course, were penniless; one or two were priests, one a monk, six or seven in various military services, and the elder at home at Schloss Galgenstein breeding horses, hunting wild boars, swindling tenants, living in a great house with small means; obliged to be sordid at home all the year, to be splendid for a month at the capital, as is the way with many other noblemen. Our young count, Count Gustavus Adolphus Maximilian von Galgenstein, had been in the service of the French, as page to a nobleman; then of his Majesty's *gardes du corps;* then a lieutenant and captain in the Bavarian service; and when, after the battle of Blenheim, two regiments of Germans came over to the winning side, Gustavus Adolphus Maximilian found himself among them; and at the epoch when this story commences, had enjoyed English pay for a year or more. It is unnecessary to say how he exchanged into his present regiment; how it appeared that, before her marriage, handsome John Churchill had known the young gentleman's mother, when they were both penniless hangers-on at Charles the Second's court; — it is, we say, quite useless to repeat all the scandal of which we are perfectly masters, and to trace step by step the events of his history. Here, however, was Gustavus Adolphus, in a small inn, in a small village of Warwickshire, on an autumn evening in the year 1705; and at the very moment when this history begins, he and Mr. Brock, his corporal and friend, were seated at a round table before the kitchen-fire, while a small groom of the establishment was leading up and down on the village green, before the inn door, two black, glossy, long-tailed, barrel-bellied, thick-flanked, arched-necked, Roman-nosed Flanders horses, which were the property of the two gentlemen now taking their ease at the "Bugle

Digitized by Google

Inn." The two gentlemen were seated at their ease at the inn table, drinking mountain-wine; and if the reader fancies from the sketch which we have given of their lives, or from his own blindness and belief in the perfectibility of human nature, that the sun of that autumn evening shone upon any two men in county or city, at desk or harvest, at court or at Newgate, drunk or sober, who were greater rascals than Count Gustavus Galgenstein and Corporal Peter Brock, he is egregiously mistaken and his knowledge of human nature is not worth a fig. If they had not been two prominent scoundrels, what earthly business should we have in detailing their histories? What would the public care for them? Who would meddle with dull virtue, humdrum sentiment, or stupid innocence, when vice, agreeable vice, is the only thing which the readers of romances care to hear?

The little horse-boy, who was leading the two black Flanders horses up and down the green, might have put them in the stable for any good that the horses got by the gentle exercise which they were now taking in the cool evening air, as their owners had not ridden very far or very hard, and there was not a hair turned of their sleek shining coats; but the lad had been especially ordered so to walk the horses about until he received further commands from the gentlemen reposing in the "Bugle" kitchen; and the idlers of the village seemed so pleased with the beasts, and their smart saddles and shining bridles, that it would have been a pity to deprive them of the pleasure of contemplating such an innocent spectacle. Over the Count's horse was thrown a fine red cloth, richly embroidered in yellow worsted, a very large count's coronet and a cipher at the four corners of the covering; and under this might be seen a pair of gorgeous silver stirrups, and above it, a couple of silver-mounted pistols reposing in bearskin

Digitized by Google

holsters; the bit was silver, too, and the horse's head was decorated with many smart ribbons. Of the Corporal's steed, suffice it to say, that the ornaments were in brass, as bright, though not perhaps so valuable, as those which decorated the Captain's animal. The boys, who had been at play on the green, first paused and entered into conversation with the horse-boy; then the village matrons followed; and afterwards, sauntering by ones and twos, came the village maidens, who love soldiers as flies love treacle; presently the males began to arrive, and lo! the parson of the parish, taking his evening walk with Mrs. Dobbs, and the four children his offspring, at length joined himself to his flock.

To this audience the little ostler explained that the animals belonged to two gentlemen now reposing at the "Bugle:" one young with gold hair, the other old with grizzled locks; both in red coats; both in jack-boots; putting the house into a bustle, and calling for the best. He then discoursed to some of his own companions regarding the merits of the horses; and the parson, a learned man, explained to the villagers, that one of the travellers must be a count, or at least had a count's horsecloth; pronounced that the stirrups were of real silver, and checked the impetuosity of his son, William Nassau Dobbs, who was for mounting the animals, and who expressed a longing to fire off one of the pistols in the holsters.

As this family discussion was taking place, the gentlemen whose appearance had created so much attention came to the door of the inn, and the elder and stouter was seen to smile at his companion; after which he strolled leisurely over the green, and seemed to examine with much benevolent satisfaction the assemblage of villagers who were staring at him and the quadrupeds.

Mr. Brock, when he saw the parson's band and cas-

Digitized by Google

sock, took off his beaver reverently, and saluted the divine: "I hope your reverence won't baulk the little fellow," said he; "I think I heard him calling out for a ride, and whether he should like my horse, or his lordship's horse, I am sure it is all one. Don't be afraid, sir! the horses are not tired; we have only come seventy mile to-day, and Prince Eugene once rode a matter of fifty-two leagues (a hundred and fifty miles), sir, upon that horse, between sunrise and sunset."

"Gracious powers! on which horse?" said Doctor Dobbs, very solemnly.

"On *this*, sir, — on mine, Corporal Brock of Cutts's black gelding, 'William of Nassau.' The Prince, sir, gave it me after Blenheim fight, for I had my own legs carried away by a cannon-ball, just as I cut down two of Sauerkrauter's regiment, who had made the Prince prisoner."

"Your own legs, sir!" said the Doctor. "Gracious goodness! this is more and more astonishing!"

"No, no, not my own legs, my horse's I mean, sir; and the Prince gave me 'William of Nassau' that very day."

To this no direct reply was made; but the Doctor looked at Mrs. Dobbs, and Mrs. Dobbs and the rest of the children at her eldest son, who grinned and said, "Is n't it wonderful?" The Corporal to this answered nothing, but, resuming his account, pointed to the other horse and said, "*That* horse, sir — good as mine is — that horse, with the silver stirrups, is his Excellency's horse, Captain Count Maximilian Gustavus Adolphus von Galgenstein, captain of horse and of the Holy Roman empire" (he lifted here his hat with much gravity, and all the crowd, even to the parson, did likewise). "We call him 'George of Denmark,' sir, in compliment to her Majesty's husband: he is Blenheim too, sir; Marshal

Digitized by Google

Tallard rode him on that day, and you know how *he* was taken prisoner by the Count."

"George of Denmark, Marshal Tallard, William of Nassau! this is strange indeed, most wonderful! Why, sir, little are you aware that there are before you, *at this moment*, two other living beings who bear these venerated names! My boys, stand forward! Look here, sir: these children have been respectively named after our late sovereign and the husband of our present Queen."

"And very good names too, sir; ay, and very noble little fellows too; and I propose that, with your reverence and your ladyship's leave, William Nassau here shall ride on George of Denmark, and George of Denmark shall ride on William of Nassau."

When this speech of the Corporal's was made, the whole crowd set up a loyal hurrah; and, with much gravity, the two little boys were lifted up into the saddles; and the Corporal leading one, entrusted the other to the horse-boy, and so together marched stately up and down the green.

The popularity which Mr. Brock gained by this manœuvre was very great; but with regard to the names of the horses and children, which coincided so extraordinarily, it is but fair to state, that the christening of the quadrupeds had only taken place about two minutes before the dragoon's appearance on the green. For if the fact must be confessed, he, while seated near the inn window, had kept a pretty wistful eye upon all going on without; and the horses marching thus to and fro for the wonderment of the village, were only placards or advertisements for the riders.

There was, besides the boy now occupied with the horses, and the landlord and landlady of the "Bugle Inn," another person connected with that establishment

Digitized by Google

—a very smart, handsome, vain, giggling servant-girl, about the age of sixteen, who went by the familiar name of Cat, and attended upon the gentlemen in the parlour, while the landlady was employed in cooking their supper in the kitchen. This young person had been educated in the village poor-house, and having been pronounced by Doctor Dobbs and the schoolmaster the idlest, dirtiest, and most passionate little minx with whom either had ever had to do, she was, after receiving a very small portion of literary instruction (indeed it must be stated that the young lady did not know her letters), bound apprentice at the age of nine years to Mrs. Score, her relative, and landlady of the "Bugle Inn."

If Miss Cat, or Catherine Hall, was a slattern and a minx, Mrs. Score was a far superior shrew; and for the seven years of her apprenticeship, the girl was completely at her mistress's mercy. Yet though wondrously stingy, jealous, and violent, while her maid was idle and extravagant, and her husband seemed to abet the girl, Mrs. Score put up with the wench's airs, idleness, and caprices, without ever wishing to dismiss her from the "Bugle." The fact is, that Miss Catherine was a great beauty; and for about two years, since her fame had begun to spread, the custom of the inn had also increased vastly. When there was a debate whether the farmers, on their way from market, would take t' other pot, Catherine, by appearing with it, would straightway cause the liquor to be swallowed and paid for; and when the traveller who proposed riding that night and sleeping at Coventry or Birmingham, was asked by Miss Catherine whether he would like a fire in his bedroom, he generally was induced to occupy it, although he might before have vowed to Mrs. Score that he would not for a thousand guineas be absent from home

Digitized by Google

that night. The girl had, too, half-a-dozen lovers in the village; and these were bound in honour to spend their pence at the alehouse she inhabited. O woman, lovely woman! what strong resolves canst thou twist round thy little finger! what gunpowder passions canst thou kindle with a single sparkle of thine eye! what lies and fribble nonsense canst thou make us listen to, as they were gospel truth or splendid wit! above all, what bad liquor canst thou make us swallow when thou puttest a kiss within the cup — and we are content to call the poison wine!

The mountain-wine at the "Bugle" was, in fact, execrable; but Mrs. Cat, who served it to the two soldiers, made it so agreeable to them, that they found it a passable, even a pleasant task, to swallow the contents of a second bottle. The miracle had been wrought instantaneously on her appearance: for whereas at that very moment the Count was employed in cursing the wine, the landlady, the winegrower, and the English nation generally, when the young woman entered and (choosing so to interpret the oaths) said, "Coming, your honour; I think your honour called" — Gustavus Adolphus whistled, stared at her very hard, and seeming quite dumb-stricken by her appearance, contented himself by swallowing a whole glass of mountain by way of reply.

Mr. Brock was, however, by no means so confounded as his captain: he was thirty years older than the latter, and in the course of fifty years of military life had learned to look on the most dangerous enemy, or the most beautiful woman, with the like daring, devil-may-care determination to conquer.

"My dear Mary," then said that gentleman, "his honour is a lord; as good as a lord, that is; for all he allows such humble fellows as I am to drink with him."

Digitized by Google

MRS. CATHERINE'S Temptation

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Catherine dropped a low curtsey, and said, "Well, I don't know if you are joking a poor country girl, as all you soldier gentlemen do; but his honour *looks* like a lord: though I never see one, to be sure."

"Then," said the Captain, gathering courage, "how do you know I look like one, pretty Mary?"

"Pretty Catherine: I mean Catherine, if you please, sir."

Here Mr. Brock burst into a roar of laughter, and shouting with many oaths that she was right at first, invited her to give him what he called a buss.

Pretty Catherine turned away from him at this request, and muttered something about "Keep your distance, low fellow! buss indeed! poor country girl," &c. &c., placing herself, as if for protection, on the side of the Captain. That gentleman looked also very angry; but whether at the sight of innocence so outraged, or the insolence of the Corporal for daring to help himself first, we cannot say. "Hark ye, Mr. Brock," he cried very fiercely, "I will suffer no such liberties in my presence: remember, it is only my condescension which permits you to share my bottle in this way; take care I don't give you instead a taste of my cane." So saying, he, in a protecting manner, placed one hand round Mrs. Catherine's waist, holding the other clenched very near to the Corporal's nose.

Mrs. Catherine, for *her* share of this action of the Count's, dropped another curtsey, and said, "Thank you, my lord." But Galgenstein's threat did not appear to make any impression on Mr. Brock, as indeed there was no reason that it should; for the Corporal, at a combat of fisticuffs, could have pounded his commander into a jelly in ten minutes: so he contented himself by saying, "Well, noble Captain, there's no harm done; it *is* an honour for poor old Peter Brock to be at table with you, and I *am* sorry sure enough."

Digitized by Google

"In truth, Peter, I believe thou art; thou hast good reason, eh, Peter? But never fear, man; had I struck thee, I never would have hurt thee."

"I *know* you would not," replied Brock, laying his hand on his heart with much gravity; and so peace was made, and healths were drank. Miss Catherine condescended to put her lips to the Captain's glass; who swore that the wine was thus converted into nectar; and although the girl had not previously heard of that liquor, she received the compliment as a compliment, and smiled and simpered in return.

The poor thing had never before seen anybody so handsome, or so finely dressed as the Count; and, in the simplicity of her coquetry, allowed her satisfaction to be quite visible. Nothing could be more clumsy than the gentleman's mode of complimenting her; but for this, perhaps, his speeches were more effective than others more delicate would have been; and though she said to each, "Oh, now, my lord," and "La, Captain, how can you flatter one so?" and "Your honour's laughing at me," and made such polite speeches as are used on these occasions, it was manifest from the flutter and blush, and the grin of satisfaction which lighted up the buxom features of the little country beauty, that the Count's first operations had been highly successful. When following up his attack, he produced from his neck a small locket (which had been given him by a Dutch lady at the Brill), and begged Miss Catherine to wear it for his sake, and chucked her under the chin and called her his little rosebud, it was pretty clear how things would go: anybody who could see the expression of Mr. Brock's countenance at this event might judge of the progress of the irresistible High-Dutch conqueror.

Being of a very vain, communicative turn, our fair

Digitized by Google

barmaid gave her two companions not only a pretty long account of herself, but of many other persons in the village, whom she could perceive from the window opposite to which she stood. "Yes, your honour," said she — "my lord, I mean; sixteen last March, though there 's a many girl in the village that at my age is quite chits. There 's Polly Randall now, that red-haired girl along with Thomas Curtis: she 's seventeen if she 's a day, though he is the very first sweetheart she has had. Well, as I am saying, I was bred up here in the village — father and mother died very young, and I was left a poor orphan — well, bless us! if Thomas have n't kissed her! — to the care of Mrs. Score, my aunt, who has been a mother to me — a stepmother, you know; — and I 've been to Stratford fair, and to Warwick many a time; and there 's two people who have offered to marry me, and ever so many who want to, and I won't have none — only a gentleman, as I 've always said; not a poor clodpole, like Tom there with the red waistcoat (he was one that asked me), nor a drunken fellow like Sam Blacksmith yonder, him whose wife has got the black eye, but a real gentleman, like ——"

"Like whom, my dear?" said the Captain, encouraged.

"La, sir, how can you? why, like our squire, Sir John, who rides in such a mortal fine gold coach; or, at least, like the parson, Doctor Dobbs — that 's he in the black gown, walking with Madam Dobbs in red."

"And are those his children?"

"Yes: two girls and two boys; and only think, he calls one William Nassau, and one George Denmark — is n't it odd?" And from the parson, Mrs. Catherine went on to speak of several humble personages of the village community, who, as they are not necessary to our story, need not be described at full length. It was

Digitized by Google

when, from the window, Corporal Brock saw the altercation between the worthy divine and his son, respecting the latter's ride, that he judged it a fitting time to step out on the green, and to bestow on the two horses those famous historical names which we have just heard applied to them.

Mr. Brock's diplomacy was, as we have stated, quite successful; for, when the parson's boys had ridden and retired along with their mamma and papa, other young gentlemen of humbler rank in the village were placed upon "George of Denmark" and "William of Nassau;" the Corporal joking and laughing with all the grown-up people. The women, in spite of Mr. Brock's age, his red nose, and a certain squint of his eye, vowed the Corporal was a jewel of a man; and among the men his popularity was equally great.

"How much dost thee get, Thomas Clodpole?" said Mr. Brock to a countryman (he was the man whom Mrs. Catherine had described as her suitor), who had laughed loudest at some of his jokes: "how much dost thee get for a week's work, now?"

Mr. Clodpole, whose name was really Bullock, stated that his wages amounted to "three shillings and a puddn."

"Three shillings and a puddn! — monstrous! — and for this you toil like a galley-slave, as I have seen them in Turkey and America, — ay, gentlemen, and in the country of Prester John! You shiver out of bed on icy winter mornings, to break the ice for Ball and Dapple to drink."

"Yes, indeed," said the person addressed, who seemed astounded at the extent of the Corporal's information.

"Or you clean pigsty, and take dung down to meadow; or you act watchdog and tend sheep; or you sweep a scythe over a great field of grass; and when

Digitized by Google

the sun has scorched the eyes out of your head, and sweated the flesh out of your bones, and well-nigh fried the soul out of your body, you go home, to what? — three shillings a week and a puddn! Do you get pudding every day?"

"No; only Sundays."

"Do you get money enough?"

"No, sure."

"Do you get beer enough?"

"Oh no, NEVER!" said Mr. Bullock quite resolutely.

"Worthy Clodpole, give us thy hand: it shall have beer enough this day, or my name's not Corporal Brock. Here's the money, boy! there are twenty pieces in this purse: and how do you think I got em? and how do you think I shall get others when these are gone? — by serving her sacred Majesty to be sure: long life to her, and down with the French King!"

Bullock, a few of the men, and two or three of the boys, piped out an hurrah, in compliment to this speech of the Corporal's: but it was remarked that the greater part of the crowd drew back — the women whispering ominously to them and looking at the Corporal.

"I see, ladies, what it is," said he. "You are frightened, and think I am a crimp come to steal your sweethearts away. What! call Peter Brock a double-dealer? I tell you what, boys, Jack Churchill himself has shaken this hand, and drunk a pot with me: do you think he'd shake hands with a rogue? Here's Tummas Clodpole has never had beer enough, and here am I will stand treat to him and any other gentleman; am I good enough company for him? I have money, look you, and like to spend it: what should *I* be doing dirty actions for — hay, Tummas?"

A satisfactory reply to this query was not, of course, expected by the Corporal nor uttered by Mr. Bullock;

Digitized by Google

and the end of the dispute was, that he and three or four of the rustic bystanders were quite convinced of the good intentions of their new friend, and accompanied him back to the "Bugle," to regale upon the promised beer. Among the Corporal's guests was one young fellow whose dress would show that he was somewhat better to do in the world than Clodpole and the rest of the sunburnt ragged troop, who were marching towards the alehouse. This man was the only one of his hearers who, perhaps, was sceptical as to the truth of his stories; but as soon as Bullock accepted the invitation to drink, John Hayes, the carpenter (for such was his name and profession), said, "Well, Thomas, if thou goest, I will go too."

"I know thee wilt," said Thomas: "thou 'lt goo anywhere Catty Hall is, provided thou canst goo for nothing."

"Nay, I have a penny to spend as good as the Corporal here."

"A penny to *keep*, you mean: for all your love for the lass at the 'Bugle,' did thee ever spend a shilling in the house? Thee would n't go now, but that I am going too, and the Captain here stands treat."

"Come, come, gentlemen, no quarrelling," said Mr. Brock. "If this pretty fellow will join us, amen say I: there's lots of liquor, and plenty of money to pay the score. Comrade Tummas, give us thy arm. Mr. Hayes, you 're a hearty cock, I made no doubt, and all such are welcome. Come along, my gentleman farmers, Mr. Brock shall have the honour to pay for you all." And with this, Corporal Brock, accompanied by Messrs. Hayes, Bullock, Blacksmith, Baker's-boy, Butcher, and one or two others, adjourned to the inn; the horses being, at the same time, conducted to the stable.

Although we have, in this quiet way, and without any

Digitized by Google

flourishing of trumpets, or beginning of chapters, introduced Mr. Hayes to the public; and although, at first sight, a sneaking carpenter's boy may seem hardly worthy of the notice of an intelligent reader, who looks for a good cut-throat or highwayman for a hero, or a pickpocket at the very least: this gentleman's words and actions should be carefully studied by the public, as he is destined to appear before them under very polite and curious circumstances during the course of this history. The speech of the rustic Juvenal, Mr. Clodpole, had seemed to infer that Hayes was at once careful of his money and a warm admirer of Mrs. Catherine of the "Bugle:" and both the charges were perfectly true. Hayes's father was reported to be a man of some substance; and young John, who was performing his apprenticeship in the village, did not fail to talk very big of his pretensions to fortune — of his entering, at the close of his indentures, into partnership with his father — and of the comfortable farm and house over which Mrs. John Hayes, whoever she might be, would one day preside. Thus, next to the barber and butcher, and above even his own master, Mr. Hayes took rank in the village: and it must not be concealed that his representation of wealth had made some impression upon Mrs. Hall, towards whom the young gentleman had cast the eyes of affection. If he had been tolerably well-looking, and not pale, rickety, and feeble as he was; if even he had been ugly, but withal a man of spirit, it is probable the girl's kindness for him would have been much more decided. But he was a poor weak creature, not to compare with honest Thomas Bullock, by at least nine inches; and so notoriously timid, selfish, and stingy, that there was a kind of shame in receiving his addresses openly; and what encouragement Mrs. Catherine gave him could only be in secret.

Digitized by Google

But no mortal is wise at all times : and the fact was, that Hayes, who cared for himself intensely, had set his heart upon winning Catherine ; and loved her with a desperate, greedy eagerness and desire of possession, which makes passions for women often so fierce and unreasonable among very cold and selfish men. His parents (whose frugality he had inherited) had tried in vain to wean him from this passion, and had made many fruitless attempts to engage him with women who possessed money and desired husbands: Hayes was, for a wonder, quite proof against their attractions; and, though quite ready to acknowledge the absurdity of his love for a penniless alehouse servant-girl, nevertheless persisted in it doggedly. "I know I 'm a fool," said he; "and what 's more, the girl does not care for me; but marry her I must, or I think I shall just die: and marry her I will." For very much to the credit of Miss Catherine's modesty, she had declared that marriage was with her a *sine quâ non*, and had dismissed, with the loudest scorn and indignation, all propositions of a less proper nature.

Poor Thomas Bullock was another of her admirers, and had offered to marry her ; but three shillings a week and a puddn was not to the girl's taste, and Thomas had been scornfully rejected. Hayes had also made her a direct proposal. Catherine did not say no: she was too prudent: but she was young and could wait; she did not care for Mr. Hayes *yet* enough to marry him — (it did not seem, indeed, in the young woman's nature to care for anybody) — and she gave her adorer flatteringly to understand that, if nobody better appeared in the course of a few years, she might be induced to become Mrs. Hayes. It was a dismal prospect for the poor fellow to live upon the hope of being one day Mrs. Catherine's *pis-aller*.

Digitized by Google

In the meantime she considered herself free as the wind, and permitted herself all the innocent gaieties which that "chartered libertine," a coquette, can take. She flirted with all the bachelors, widowers, and married men, in a manner which did extraordinary credit to her years: and let not the reader fancy such pastimes unnatural at her early age. The ladies — heaven bless them! — are, as a general rule, coquettes from babyhood upwards. Little *she*'s of three years old play little airs and graces upon small heroes of five; simpering misses of nine make attacks upon young gentlemen of twelve; and at sixteen, a well-grown girl, under encouraging circumstances, — say, she is pretty, in a family of ugly elder sisters, or an only child and heiress, or an humble wench at a country inn, like our fair Catherine — is at the very pink and prime of her coquetry: they will jilt you at that age with an ease and arch infantine simplicity that never can be surpassed in maturer years.

Miss Catherine, then, was a *franche coquette*, and Mr. John Hayes was miserable. His life was passed in a storm of mean passions and bitter jealousies, and desperate attacks upon the indifference-rock of Mrs. Catherine's heart, which not all his tempest of love could beat down. O cruel, cruel pangs of love unrequited! Mean rogues feel them as well as great heroes. Lives there the man in Europe who has not felt them many times? — who has not knelt, and fawned, and supplicated, and wept, and cursed, and raved, all in vain; and passed long wakeful nights with ghosts of dead hopes for company; shadows of buried remembrances that glide out of their graves of nights, and whisper, "We are dead now, but we *were* once; and we made you happy, and we come now to mock you: — despair, O lover, despair, and die?" — O cruel pangs! dismal nights! — Now a

Digitized by Google

sly demon creeps under your nightcap, and drops into your ear those soft, hope-breathing, sweet words, uttered on the well-remembered evening: there, in the drawer of your dressing-table (along with the razors, and Macassar oil), lies the dead flower that Lady Amelia Wilhelmina wore in her bosom on the night of a certain ball — the corpse of a glorious hope that seemed once as if it would live for ever, so strong was it, so full of joy and sunshine: there, in your writing-desk, among a crowd of unpaid bills, is the dirty scrap of paper, thimble-sealed, which came in company with a pair of muffetees of her knitting (she was a butcher's daughter, and did all she could, poor thing!), begging "you would ware them at collidge, and think of her who" — married a public-house three weeks afterwards, and cares for you no more now than she does for the pot-boy. But why multiply instances, or seek to depict the agony of poor, mean-spirited John Hayes? No mistake can be greater than that of fancying such great emotions of love are only felt by virtuous or exalted men: depend upon it, Love, like Death, plays havoc among the *pauperum tabernas*, and sports with rich and poor, wicked and virtuous, alike. I have often fancied, for instance, on seeing the haggard, pale young old-clothesman, who wakes the echoes of our street with his nasal cry of "Clo'!" — I have often, I said, fancied that, beside the load of exuvial coats and breeches under which he staggers, there is another weight on him — an *atrior cura* at his tail — and while his unshorn lips and nose together are performing that mocking, boisterous, Jack-indifferent cry of "Clo', clo'!" who knows what woful utterances are crying from the heart within? There he is chaffering with the footman at No. 7, about an old dressing-gown; you think his whole soul is bent only on the contest about the garment. Psha! there is, perhaps, some faithless girl in

Digitized by Google

Holywell Street who fills up his heart; and that desultory Jew-boy is a peripatetic hell! Take another instance: — take the man in the beef-shop in Saint Martin's Court. There he is, to all appearances quite calm: before the same round of beef — from morning till sundown — for hundreds of years very likely. Perhaps when the shutters are closed, and all the world tired and silent, there is HE silent, but untired — cutting, cutting, cutting. You enter, you get your meat to your liking, you depart; and, quite unmoved, on, on he goes, reaping ceaselessly the Great Harvest of Beef. You would fancy that if Passion ever failed to conquer, it had in vain assailed the calm bosom of THAT MAN. I doubt it, and would give much to know his history. Who knows what furious Ætna-flames are raging underneath the surface of that calm flesh-mountain — who can tell me that that calmness itself is not DESPAIR?

. . . . . .

The reader, if he does not now understand why it was that Mr. Hayes agreed to drink the Corporal's proffered beer, had better just read the foregoing remarks over again, and if he does not understand *then*, why, small praise to his brains. Hayes could not bear that Mr. Bullock should have a chance of seeing, and perhaps making love to Mrs. Catherine in his absence; and though the young woman never diminished her coquetries, but, on the contrary, rather increased them in his presence, it was still a kind of dismal satisfaction to be miserable in her company.

On this occasion, the disconsolate lover could be wretched to his heart's content; for Catherine had not a word or a look for him, but bestowed all her smiles upon the handsome stranger who owned the black horse. As for poor Tummas Bullock, his passion was never violent; and he was content in the present in-

Digitized by Google

stance to sigh and drink beer. He sighed and drank, sighed and drank, and drank again, until he had swallowed so much of the Corporal's liquor, as to be induced to accept a guinea from his purse also; and found himself, on returning to reason and sobriety, a soldier of Queen Anne's.

But oh! fancy the agonies of Mr. Hayes when, seated with the Corporal's friends at one end of the kitchen, he saw the Captain at the place of honour, and the smiles which the fair maid bestowed upon him; when, as she lightly whisked past him with the Captain's supper, she, pointing to the locket that once reposed on the breast of the Dutch lady at the Brill, looked archly on Hayes and said, "See, John, what his lordship has given me;" and when John's face became green and purple with rage and jealousy, Mrs. Catherine laughed ten times louder, and cried, "Coming, my lord," in a voice of shrill triumph, that bored through the soul of Mr. John Hayes and left him gasping for breath.

On Catherine's other lover, Mr. Thomas, this coquetry had no effect: he, and two comrades of his, had by this time quite fallen under the spell of the Corporal; and hope, glory, strong beer, Prince Eugene, pairs of colours, more strong beer, her blessed Majesty, plenty more strong beer, and such subjects, martial and bacchic, whirled through their dizzy brains at a railroad pace.

And now, if there had been a couple of experienced reporters present at the "Bugle Inn," they might have taken down a conversation on love and war — the two themes discussed by the two parties occupying the kitchen — which, as the parts were sung together, duetwise, formed together some very curious harmonies. Thus, while the Captain was whispering the softest nothings the Corporal was shouting the fiercest com-

Digitized by Google

bats of the war; and, like the gentleman at Penelope's table, on it *exiguo pinxit prælia tota* bero. For example: —

Captain. — "What do you say to a silver trimming, pretty Catherine? Don't you think a scarlet riding-cloak, handsomely laced, would become you wonderfully well? — and a grey hat with a blue feather — and a pretty nag to ride on — and all the soldiers to present arms as you pass, and say, There goes the Captain's lady? What do you think of a side-box at 'Lincoln's Inn' playhouse, or of standing up to a minuet with my Lord Marquis at —— ?"

Corporal. — "The ball, sir, ran right up his elbow, and was found the next day by Surgeon Splinter of ours, — where do you think, sir? — upon my honour as a gentleman it came out of the nape of his —— "

Captain. — "Necklace — and a sweet pair of diamond earrings, mayhap — and a little shower of patches, which ornament a lady's face wondrously — and a leetle rouge — though, egad! such peach-cheeks as yours don't want it; — fie! Mrs. Catherine, I should think the birds must come and peck at them as if they were fruit —— "

Corporal. — "Over the wall; and three-and-twenty of our fellows jumped after me. By the Pope of Rome, friend Tummas, that was a day! — Had you seen how the Mounseers looked when four-and-twenty rampaging he-devils, sword and pistol, cut and thrust, pell-mell came tumbling into the redoubt! Why, sir, we left in three minutes as many artillerymen's heads as there were cannon-balls. It was, 'Ah sacré!' 'D—— you, take that!' 'O mon dieu!' run him through. 'Ventre-bleu!' and it *was* ventrebleu with him, I warrant you: for *bleu*, in the French language, means 'through;' and *ventre* — why, you see, ventre means —— "

Digitized by Google

Captain. — "Waists, which are worn now excessive long; — and for the hoops, if you *could* but see them — stap my vitals, my dear, but there was a lady at Warwick's assembly (she came in one of my lord's coaches) who had a hoop as big as a tent: you might have dined under it comfortably; — ha! ha! 'pon my faith, now ——"

Corporal. — "And there we found the Duke of Marlborough seated along with Marshal Tallard, who was endeavouring to drown his sorrow over a cup of Johannisberger wine; and a good drink too, my lads, only not to compare to Warwick beer. 'Who was the man who has done this?' said our noble General. I stepped up. 'How many heads was it,' says he, 'that you cut off?' 'Nineteen,' says I, 'besides wounding several.' When he heard it (Mr. Hayes, you don't drink) I'm blest if he did n't burst into tears! 'Noble, noble fellow,' says he. 'Marshal, you must excuse me, if I am pleased to hear of the destruction of your countrymen. Noble, noble fellow! — here 's a hundred guineas for you.' Which sum he placed in my hand. 'Nay,' says the Marshal, 'the man has done his duty:' and, pulling out a magnificent gold diamond-hilted snuff-box, he gave me ——"

Mr. Bullock. — "What, a goold snuff-box? Wauns, but thee *wast* in luck, Corporal!" ——

Corporal. — "No, not the snuff-box, but — *a pinch of snuff*, — ha! ha! — run me through the body if he did n't! Could you but have seen the smile on Jack Churchill's grave face at this piece of generosity! So, beckoning Colonel Cadogan up to him, he pinched his ear and whispered ——"

Captain. — "'May I have the honour to dance a minuet with your ladyship?' The whole room was in titters at Jack's blunder; for, as you know very well,

Digitized by Google

poor Lady Susan *has a wooden leg.* Ha! ha! fancy a minuet and a wooden leg, hey, my dear?——"

Mrs. Catherine.—"Giggle—giggle—giggle: he! he! he! Oh, Captain, you rogue, you——"

Second table.—"Haw! haw! haw! Well, you *be* a foony mon, sergeant, zure enoff."

. . . . . .

This little specimen of the conversation must be sufficient. It will show pretty clearly that each of the two military commanders was conducting his operations with perfect success. Three of the detachment of five attacked by the Corporal surrendered to him: Mr. Bullock, namely, who gave in at a very early stage of the evening, and ignominiously laid down his arms under the table, after standing not more than a dozen volleys of beer; Mr. Blacksmith's boy, and a labourer whose name we have not been able to learn. Mr. Butcher himself was on the point of yielding, when he was rescued by the furious charge of a detachment that marched to his relief: his wife namely, who, with two squalling children, rushed into the "Bugle," boxed Butcher's ears, and kept up such a tremendous fire of oaths and screams upon the Corporal, that he was obliged to retreat. Fixing then her claws into Mr. Butcher's hair, she proceeded to drag him out of the premises; and thus Mr. Brock was overcome. His attack upon John Hayes was a still greater failure; for that young man seemed to be invincible by drink, if not by love: and at the end of the drinking-bout was a great deal more cool than the Corporal himself; to whom he wished a very polite good-evening, as calmly he took his hat to depart. He turned to look at Catherine, to be sure, and then he was not quite so calm: but Catherine did not give any reply to his good-night. She was seated at the Captain's table playing

Digitized by Google

at cribbage with him; and though Count Gustavus Maximilian lost every game, he won more than he lost,—sly fellow!—and Mrs. Catherine was no match for him.

It is to be presumed that Hayes gave some information to Mrs. Score, the landlady: for, on leaving the kitchen, he was seen to linger for a moment in the bar; and very soon after Mrs. Catherine was called away from her attendance on the Count, who, when he asked for a sack and toast, was furnished with those articles by the landlady herself: and, during the half-hour in which he was employed in consuming this drink, Monsieur de Galgenstein looked very much disturbed and out of humour, and cast his eyes to the door perpetually; but no Catherine came. At last, very sulkily, he desired to be shown to bed, and walked as well as he could (for, to say truth, the noble Count was by this time somewhat unsteady on his legs) to his chamber. It was Mrs. Score who showed him to it, and closed the curtains, and pointed triumphantly to the whiteness of the sheets.

"It's a very comfortable room," said she, "though not the best in the house; which belong of right to your lordship's worship; but our best room has two beds, and Mr. Corporal is in that, locked and double-locked, with his three tipsy recruits. But your honour will find this here bed comfortable and well-aired; I've slept in it myself this eighteen years."

"What, my good woman, you are going to sit up, eh? It's cruel hard on you, madam."

"Sit up, my lord? bless you, no! I shall have half of our Cat's bed; as I always do when there's company." And with this Mrs. Score curtseyed and retired.

. . . . . .

Very early the next morning the active landlady and her bustling attendant had prepared the ale and bacon

Digitized by Google

for the Corporal and his three converts, and had set a nice white cloth for the Captain's breakfast. The young blacksmith did not eat with much satisfaction; but Mr. Bullock and his friend betrayed no sign of discontent, except such as may be consequent upon an evening's carouse. They walked very contentedly to be registered before Doctor Dobbs, who was also justice of the peace, and went in search of their slender bundles, and took leave of their few acquaintances without much regret: for the gentlemen had been bred in the workhouse, and had not, therefore, a large circle of friends.

It wanted only an hour of noon, and the noble Count had not descended. The men were waiting for him, and spent much of the Queen's money (earned by the sale of their bodies over night) while thus expecting him. Perhaps Mrs. Catherine expected him too, for she had offered many times to run up — with my lord's boots — with the hot water — to show Mr. Brock the way; who sometimes condescended to officiate as barber. But on all these occasions Mrs. Score had prevented her; not scolding, but with much gentleness and smiling. At last, more gentle and smiling than ever, she came downstairs and said, "Catherine darling, his honour the Count is mighty hungry this morning, and vows he could pick the wing of a fowl. Run down, child, to Farmer Brigg's and get one: pluck it before you bring it, you know, and we will make his lordship a pretty breakfast."

Catherine took up her basket, and away she went by the back-yard, through the stables. There she heard the little horse-boy whistling and hissing after the manner of horse-boys; and there she learned that Mrs. Score had been inventing an ingenious story to have her out of the way. The ostler said he was just going to lead the two horses round to the door. The Corporal had

Digitized by Google

been, and they were about to start on the instant for Stratford.

The fact was that Count Gustavus Adolphus, far from wishing to pick the wing of a fowl, had risen with a horror and loathing for everything in the shape of food, and for any liquor stronger than small beer. Of this he had drunk a cup, and said he should ride immediately to Stratford; and when, on ordering his horses, he had asked politely of the landlady "why the d—— *she* always came up, and why she did not send the girl," Mrs. Score informed the Count that her Catherine was gone out for a walk along with the young man to whom she was to be married, and would not be visible that day. On hearing this the Captain ordered his horses that moment, and abused the wine, the bed, the house, the landlady, and everything connected with the "Bugle Inn."

Out the horses came: the little boys of the village gathered round; the recruits, with bunches of ribands is their beavers, appeared presently; Corporal Brock came swaggering out, and, slapping the pleased blacksmith on the back, bade him mount his horse; while the boys hurrah'd. Then the Captain came out, gloomy and majestic; to him Mr. Brock made a military salute, which clumsily, and with much grinning, the recruits imitated. "I shall walk on with these brave fellows, your honour, and meet you at Stratford," said the Corporal. "Good," said the Captain, as he mounted. The landlady curtseyed; the children hurrah'd more; the little horse-boy, who held the bridle with one hand and the stirrup with the other, and expected a crown-piece from such a noble gentleman, got only a kick and a curse, as Count von Galgenstein shouted, "D—— you all, get out of the way!" and galloped off; and John Hayes, who had been sneaking about the inn all the morning,

Digitized by Google

felt a weight off his heart when he saw the Captain ride off alone.

. . . . . .

O foolish Mrs. Score! O dolt of a John Hayes! If the landlady had allowed the Captain and the maid to have their way, and meet but for a minute before recruits, sergeant, and all, it is probable that no harm would have been done, and that this history would never have been written.

When Count von Galgenstein had ridden half a mile on the Stratford road, looking as black and dismal as Napoleon galloping from the romantic village of Waterloo, he espied, a few score yards onwards, at the turn of the road, a certain object which caused him to check his horse suddenly, brought a tingling red into his cheeks, and made his heart to go thump — thump! against his side. A young lass was sauntering slowly along the footpath, with a basket swinging from one hand, and a bunch of hedge-flowers in the other. She stopped once or twice to add a fresh one to her nosegay, and might have seen him, the Captain thought; but no, she never looked directly towards him, and still walked on. Sweet innocent! she was singing as if none were near; her voice went soaring up to the clear sky, and the Captain put his horse on the grass, that the sound of the hoofs might not disturb the music.

"When the kine had given a pailful" — sang she,
"And the sheep came bleating home,
Poll, who knew it would be healthful,
Went a-walking out with Tom.
Hand in hand, sir, on the land, sir,
As they walked to and fro,
Tom made jolly love to Polly,
But was answered no, no, no."

Digitized by Google

The Captain had put his horse on the grass, that the sound of his hoofs might not disturb the music; and now he pushed its head on to the bank, where straightway "George of Denmark" began chewing of such a salad as grew there. And now the Captain slid off stealthily; and smiling comically, and hitching up his great jack-boots, and moving forward with a jerking tiptoe step, he, just as she was trilling the last *o-o-o* of the last *no* in the above poem of Tom D'Urfey, came up to her, and touching her lightly on the waist, said,

"My dear, your very humble servant."

Mrs. Catherine (you know you have found her out long ago!) gave a scream and a start, and would have turned pale if she could. As it was, she only shook all over, and said,

"Oh, sir, how you *did* frighten me!"

"Frighten you, my rosebud! why, run me through, I'd die rather than frighten you. Gad, child, tell me now, am I so *very* frightful?"

"Oh, no, your honour, I did n't mean that; only I was n't thinking to meet you here, or that you would ride so early at all: for, if you please, sir, I was going to fetch a chicken for your lordship's breakfast, as my mistress said you would like one; and I thought, instead of going to Farmer Brigg's, down Birmingham way, as she told me, I'd go to Farmer Bird's, where the chickens is better, sir — my lord, I mean."

"Said I'd like a chicken for breakfast, the old cat! why, I told her I would not eat a morsel to save me — I was so dru—, I mean I ate such a good supper last night — and I bade her to send me a pot of small beer, and to tell you to bring it; and the wretch said you were gone out with your sweetheart ——"

"What! John Hayes, the creature? Oh, what a naughty story-telling woman!"

Digitized by Google

"—You had walked out with your sweetheart, and I was not to see you any more; and I was mad with rage, and ready to kill myself; I was, my dear."

"Oh, sir! pray, *pray* don't."

"For your sake, my sweet angel?"

"Yes, for my sake, if such a poor girl as me can persuade noble gentlemen."

"Well, then for *your* sake, I won't: no, I'll live; but why live? Hell and fury, if I do live I'm miserable without you; I am,—you know I am,—you adorable, beautiful, cruel, wicked Catherine!"

Catherine's reply to this was "La, bless me! I do believe your horse is running away." And so he was; for having finished his meal in the hedge, he first looked towards his master and paused, as it were, irresolutely; then, by a sudden impulse, flinging up his tail and his hind legs, he scampered down the road.

Mrs. Hall ran lightly after the horse, and the Captain after Mrs. Hall; and the horse ran quicker and quicker every moment, and might have led them a long chase—when lo! debouching from a twist in the road, came the detachment of cavalry and infantry under Mr. Brock. The moment he was out of sight of the village, that gentleman had desired the blacksmith to dismount, and had himself jumped into the saddle, maintaining the subordination of his army by drawing a pistol and swearing that he would blow out the brains of any person who attempted to run. When the Captain's horse came near the detachment he paused, and suffered himself to be caught by Tummas Bullock, who held him until the owner and Mrs. Catherine came up.

Mr. Bullock looked comically grave when he saw the pair; but the Corporal graciously saluted Mrs. Catherine, and said it was a fine day for walking.

"La, sir, and so it is," said she, panting in a very

Digitized by Google

pretty and distressing way, "but not for *running*. I do protest — ha! — and vow that I really can scarcely stand. I'm so tired of running after that naughty, naughty horse!"

"How do, Cattern?" said Thomas. "Zee, I be going a zouldiering because thee would n't have me." And here Mr. Bullock grinned. Mrs. Catherine made no sort of reply, but protested once more she should die of running. If the truth were told, she was somewhat vexed at the arrival of the Corporal's detachment, and had had very serious thoughts of finding herself quite tired just as he came in sight.

A sudden thought brought a smile of bright satisfaction in the Captain's eyes. He mounted the horse which Tummas still held. "*Tired*, Mrs. Catherine," said he, "and for my sake? By heavens, you shan't walk a step farther! No, you shall ride back with a guard of honour! Back to the village, gentleman! — rightabout face! Show those fellows, Corporal, how to rightabout face. Now, my dear, mount behind me on Snowball; he's easy as a sedan. Put your dear little foot on the toe of my boot. There now, — up! — jump! hurrah!"

"*That's* not the way, Captain," shouted out Thomas, still holding on to the reins as the horse began to move. "Thee woan't go with him, will thee, Catty?"

But Mrs. Catherine, though she turned away her head, never let go her hold round the Captain's waist; and he, swearing a dreadful oath at Thomas, struck him across the face and hands with his riding-whip. The poor fellow, who at the first cut still held on to the rein, dropped it at the second, and as the pair galloped off, sat down on the roadside and fairly began to weep.

"*March*, you dog!" shouted out the Corporal a minute after. And so he did: and when next he saw Mrs. Catherine she *was* the Captain's lady sure enough,

Digitized by Google

and wore a grey hat with a blue feather, and red riding-coat trimmed with silver-lace. But Thomas was then on a bare-backed horse, which Corporal Brock was flanking round a ring, and he was so occupied looking between his horse's ears that he had no time to cry then, and at length got the better of his attachment.

This being a good opportunity for closing Chapter I., we ought, perhaps, to make some apologies to the public for introducing them to characters that are so utterly worthless; as we confess all our heroes, with the exception of Mr. Bullock, to be. In this we have consulted nature and history, rather than the prevailing taste and the general manner of authors. The amusing novel of "Ernest Maltravers," for instance, opens with a seduction; but then it is performed by people of the strictest virtue on both sides: and there is so much religion and philosophy in the heart of the seducer, so much tender innocence in the soul of the seduced, that — bless the little dears! — their very peccadilloes make one interested in them; and their naughtiness becomes quite sacred, so deliciously is it described. Now, if we *are* to be interested by rascally actions, let us have them with plain faces, and let them be performed, not by virtuous philosophers, but by rascals. Another clever class of novelists adopt the contrary system, and create interest by making their rascals perform virtuous actions. Against these popular plans we here solemnly appeal. We say, let your rogues in novels act like rogues, and your honest men like honest men; don't let us have any juggling and thimblerigging with virtue and vice, so that, at the end of three volumes, the bewildered reader shall not know which is which; don't let us find ourselves kindling at the generous qualities of thieves, and sympathising with the rascalities of noble hearts. For our

Digitized by Google

own part, we know what the public likes, and have chosen rogues for our characters, and have taken a story from the "Newgate Calendar," which we hope to follow out to edification. Among the rogues, at least, we will have nothing that shall be mistaken for virtues. And if the British public (after calling for three or four editions) shall give up, not only our rascals, but the rascals of all other authors, we shall be content: — we shall apply to Government for a pension, and think that our duty is done.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER II

IN WHICH ARE DEPICTED THE PLEASURES OF A SENTIMENTAL ATTACHMENT

IT will not be necessary, for the purpose of this history, to follow out very closely all the adventures which occurred to Mrs. Catherine from the period when she quitted the "Bugle" and became the Captain's lady; for, although it would be just as easy to show as not, that the young woman, by following the man of her heart, had only yielded to an innocent impulse, and by remaining with him for a certain period, had proved the depth and strength of her affection for him, — although we might make very tender and eloquent apologies for the error of both parties, the reader might possibly be disgusted at such descriptions and such arguments: which, besides, are already done to his hand in the novel of "Ernest Maltravers" before mentioned.

From the gentleman's manner towards Mrs. Catherine, and from his brilliant and immediate success, the reader will doubtless have concluded, in the first place, that Gustavus Adolphus had not a very violent affection for Mrs. Cat; in the second place, that he was a professional lady-killer, and therefore likely at some period to resume his profession; thirdly, and to conclude, that a connection so begun, must, in the nature of things, be likely to end speedily.

And so, to do the Count justice, it would, if he had been allowed to follow his own inclination entirely; for

Digitized by Google

(as many young gentlemen will, and yet no praise to them) in about a week he began to be indifferent, in a month to be weary, in two months to be angry, in three to proceed to blows and curses; and, in short, to repent most bitterly the hour when he had ever been induced to present Mrs. Catherine the toe of his boot, for the purpose of lifting her on to his horse.

"Egad!" said he to the Corporal one day, when confiding his griefs to Mr. Brock, "I wish my toe had been cut off before ever it served as a ladder to this little vixen."

"Or perhaps your honour would wish to kick her downstairs with it?" delicately suggested Mr. Brock.

"Kick her! why, the wench would hold so fast by the banisters that I *could* not kick her down, Mr. Brock. To tell you a bit of a secret, I *have* tried as much — not to kick her — no, no, not kick her, certainly: that's ungentlemanly — but to *induce* her to go back to that cursed pot-house where we fell in with her. I have given her many hints ——"

"Oh, yes, I saw your honour give her one yesterday — with a mug of beer. By the laws, as the ale run all down her face, and she clutched a knife to run at you, I don't think I ever saw such a she-devil! That woman will do for your honour some day, if you provoke her."

"Do for *me?* No, hang it, Mr. Brock, never! She loves every hair of my head, sir: she worships me, Corporal. Egad, yes! she worships me; and would much sooner apply a knife to her own weasand than scratch my little finger!"

"I think she does," said Mr. Brock.

"I'm sure of it," said the Captain. "Women, look you, are like dogs, they like to be ill-treated: they like it, sir; I know they do. I never had anything to do

Digitized by Google

with a woman in my life but I ill-treated her, and she liked me the better."

"Mrs. Hall ought to be *very* fond of you then, sure enough!" said Mr. Corporal.

"Very fond; — ha, ha! Corporal, you wag you — and so she *is* very fond. Yesterday, after the knife-and-beer scene — no wonder I threw the liquor in her face: it was so dev'lish flat that no gentleman could drink it: and I told her never to draw it till dinner-time ——"

"Oh, it was enough to put an angel in a fury!" said Brock.

"— Well, yesterday, after the knife business, when you had got the carver out of her hand, off she flings to her bed-room, will not eat a bit of dinner forsooth, and remains locked up for a couple of hours. At two o'clock afternoon (I was over a tankard), out comes the little she-devil, her face pale, her eyes bleared, and the tip of her nose as red as fire with sniffling and weeping. Making for my hand, 'Max,' says she, 'will you forgive me?' 'What!' says I. 'Forgive a murderess?' says I. 'No, curse me, never!' 'Your cruelty will kill me,' sobbed she. 'Cruelty be hanged!' says I; 'did n't you draw that beer an hour before dinner?' She could say nothing to *this*, you know, and I swore that every time she did so, I would fling it into her face again. Whereupon back she flounced to her chamber, where she wept and stormed until night-time."

"When you forgave her?"

"I *did* forgive her, that's positive. You see I had supped at the 'Rose' along with Tom Trippet and half-a-dozen pretty fellows; and I had eased a great fat-headed Warwickshire land-junker — what d' ye call him? — squire, of forty pieces; and I'm dev'lish good-humoured when I've won, and so Cat and I made it up:

Digitized by Google

but I 've taught her never to bring me stale beer again — ha, ha!"

This conversation will explain, a great deal better than any description of ours, however eloquent, the state of things as between Count Maximilian and Mrs. Catherine, and the feelings which they entertained for each other. The woman loved him, that was the fact. And, as we have shown in the previous chapter how John Hayes, a mean-spirited fellow as ever breathed, in respect of all other passions a pigmy, was in the passion of love a giant, and followed Mrs. Catherine with a furious longing which might seem at the first to be foreign to his nature; in the like manner, and playing at cross-purposes, Mrs. Hall had become smitten of the Captain; and, as he said truly, only liked him the better for the brutality which she received at his hands. For it is my opinion, Madam, that love is a bodily infirmity, from which humankind can no more escape than from small-pox; and which attacks every one of us, from the first duke in the Peerage down to Jack Ketch inclusive; which has no respect for rank, virtue, or roguery in man, but sets each in his turn in a fever; which breaks out the deuce knows how or why, and, raging its appointed time, fills each individual of the one sex with a blind fury and longing for some one of the other (who may be pure, gentle, blue-eyed, beautiful, and good; or vile, shrewish, squinting, hunchbacked, and hideous, according to circumstances and luck); which dies away, perhaps in the natural course, if left to have its way, but which contradiction causes to rage more furiously than ever. Is not history, from the Trojan war upwards and downwards, full of instances of such strange inexplicable passions? Was not Helen, by the most moderate calculation, ninety years of age when she went off with his Royal Highness Prince Paris of Troy? Was

Digitized by Google

not Madame La Vallière ill-made, blear-eyed, tallow-complexioned, scraggy, and with hair like tow? Was not Wilkes the ugliest, charmingest, most successful man in the world? Such instances might be carried out so as to fill a volume; but *cui bono?* Love is fate, and not will; its origin not to be explained, its progress irresistible: and the best proof of this may be had at Bow Street any day, where, if you ask any officer of the establishment how they take most thieves, he will tell you at the houses of the women. They must see the dear creatures though they hang for it; they will love, though they have their necks in the halter. And with regard to the other position, that ill-usage on the part of the man does not destroy the affection of the woman, have we not numberless police-reports showing how, when a bystander would beat a husband for beating ing his wife, man and wife fall together on the interloper and punish him for his meddling?

These points, then, being settled to the satisfaction of all parties, the reader will not be disposed to question the assertion that Mrs. Hall had a real affection for the gallant Count, and grew, as Mr. Brock was pleased to say, like a beefsteak, more tender as she was thumped. Poor thing, poor thing! his flashy airs and smart looks had overcome her in a single hour; and no more is wanted to plunge into love over head and ears; no more is wanted to make a first love with — and a woman's first love lasts *for ever* (a man's twenty-fourth or twenty-fifth is perhaps the best): you can't kill it, do what you will; it takes root, and lives and even grows, never mind what the soil may be in which it is planted, or the bitter weather it must bear — often as one has seen a wall-flower grow — out of a stone.

In the first weeks of their union, the Count had at least been liberal to her: she had a horse and fine

Digitized by Google

clothes, and received abroad some of those flattering attentions which she held at such high price. He had, however, some ill-luck at play, or had been forced to pay some bills, or had some other satisfactory reason for being poor, and his establishment was very speedily diminished. He argued that, as Mrs. Catherine had been accustomed to wait on others all her life, she might now wait upon herself and him; and when the incident of the beer arose, she had been for some time employed as the Count's housekeeper, with unlimited superintendence over his comfort, his cellar, his linen, and such matters as bachelors are delighted to make over to active female hands. To do the poor wretch justice, she actually kept the man's *ménage* in the best order; nor was there any point of extravagance with which she could be charged, except a little extravagance of dress displayed on the very few occasions when he condescended to walk abroad with her, and extravagance of language and passion in the frequent quarrels they had together. Perhaps in such a connection as subsisted between this precious couple, these faults are inevitable on the part of the woman. She must be silly and vain, and will pretty surely therefore be fond of dress; and she must, disguise it as she will, be perpetually miserable and brooding over her fall, which will cause her to be violent and quarrelsome.

Such, at least, was Mrs. Hall; and very early did the poor vain, misguided wretch begin to reap what she had sown.

For a man, remorse under these circumstances is perhaps uncommon. No stigma affixes on *him* for betraying a woman: no bitter pangs of mortified vanity; no insulting looks of superiority from his neighbour, and no sentence of contemptuous banishment is read against him; these all fall on the tempted, not on the tempter, who is

Digitized by Google

permitted to go free. The chief thing that a man learns after having successfully practised on a woman is to despise the poor wretch whom he has won. The game, in fact, and the glory, such as it is, is all his, and the punishment alone falls upon her. Consider this, ladies, when charming young gentlemen come to woo you with soft speeches. You have nothing to win, except wretchedness, and scorn, and desertion. Consider this, and be thankful to your Solomons for telling it.

It came to pass, then, that the Count had come to have a perfect contempt and indifference for Mrs. Hall; — how should he not for a young person who had given herself up to him so easily? — and would have been quite glad of any opportunity of parting with her. But there was a certain lingering shame about the man, which prevented him from saying at once and abruptly, "Go!" and the poor thing did not choose to take such hints as fell out in the course of their conversation and quarrels. And so they kept on together, he treating her with simple insult, and she hanging on desperately, by whatever feeble twig she could find, to the rock beyond which all was naught, or death, to her.

Well, after the night with Tom Trippet and the pretty fellows at the "Rose," to which we have heard the Count allude in the conversation just recorded, Fortune smiled on him a good deal; for the Warwickshire Squire, who had lost forty pieces on that occasion, insisted on having his revenge the night after; when, strange to say, a hundred and fifty more found their way into the pouch of his Excellency the Count. Such a sum as this quite set the young nobleman afloat again, and brought back a pleasing equanimity to his mind, which had been a good deal disturbed in the former difficult circumstances; and in this, for a little and to a certain extent, poor Cat had the happiness

Digitized by Google

to share. He did not alter the style of his establishment, which consisted, as before, of herself and a small person who acted as scourer, kitchen-wench, and scullion; Mrs. Catherine always putting her hand to the principal pieces of the dinner; but he treated his mistress with tolerable good-humour; or, to speak more correctly, with such bearable brutality as might be expected from a man like him to a woman in her condition. Besides, a certain event was about to take place, which not unusually occurs in circumstances of this nature, and Mrs. Catherine was expecting soon to lie in.

The Captain, distrusting naturally the strength of his own paternal feelings, had kindly endeavoured to provide a parent for the coming infant; and to this end had opened a negotiation with our friend Mr. Thomas Bullock, declaring that Mrs. Cat should have a fortune of twenty guineas, and reminding Tummas of his ancient flame for her: but Mr. Tummas, when this proposition was made to him, declined it, with many oaths, and vowed that he was perfectly satisfied with his present bachelor condition. In this dilemma, Mr. Brock stepped forward, who declared hinself very ready to accept Mrs. Catherine and her fortune; and might possibly have become the possessor of both, had not Mrs. Cat, the moment she heard of the proposed arrangement, with fire in her eyes, and rage — oh, how bitter! — in her heart, prevented the success of the measure by proceeding incontinently to the first justice of the peace, and there swearing before his worship who was the father of the coming child.

This proceeding, which she had expected would cause not a little indignation on the part of her lord and master, was received by him, strangely enough, with considerable good-humour: he swore that the wench had served him a good trick, and was rather amused at the

Digitized by Google

anger, the outbreak of fierce rage and contumely, and the wretched, wretched tears of heart-sick desperation, which followed her announcement of this step to him. For Mr. Brock, she repelled his offer with scorn and loathing, and treated the notion of a union with Mr. Bullock with yet fiercer contempt. Marry him indeed! a workhouse pauper carrying a brown-bess! She would have died sooner, she said, or robbed on the highway. And so, to do her justice, she would: for the little minx was one of the vainest creatures in existence, and vanity (as I presume everybody knows) becomes *the* principle in certain women's hearts — their moral spectacles, their conscience, their meat and drink, their only rule of right and wrong.

As for Mr. Tummas, he, as we have seen, was quite as unfriendly to the proposition as she could be; and the Corporal, with a good deal of comical gravity, vowed that, as he could not be satisfied in his dearest wishes, he would take to drinking for a consolation: which he straightway did.

"Come, Tummas," said he to Mr. Bullock, "since we *can't* have the girl of our hearts, why, hang it, Tummas, let's drink her health!" To which Bullock had no objection. And so strongly did the disappointment weigh upon honest Corporal Brock that even when, after unheard-of quantities of beer, he could scarcely utter a word, he was seen absolutely to weep, and, in accents almost unintelligible, to curse his confounded ill-luck, at being deprived, not of a wife, but of a child: he wanted one so, he said, to comfort him in his old age.

The time of Mrs. Catherine's *couche* drew near, arrived, and was gone through safely. She presented to the world a chopping boy, who might use, if he liked, the Galgenstein arms with a bar-sinister; and in her new cares and duties had not so many opportunities

Digitized by Google

as usual of quarrelling with the Count: who, perhaps, respected her situation, or, at least, was so properly aware of the necessity of quiet to her, that he absented himself from home morning, noon, and night.

The Captain had, it must be confessed, turned these continued absences to a considerable worldly profit, for he played incessantly; and, since his first victory over the Warwickshire Squire, Fortune had been so favourable to him, that he had at various intervals amassed a sum of nearly a thousand pounds, which he used to bring home as he won; and which he deposited in a strong iron chest, cunningly screwed down by himself under his own bed. This Mrs. Catherine regularly made, and the treasure underneath it could be no secret to her. However, the noble Count kept the key, and bound her by many solemn oaths (that he discharged at her himself) not to reveal to any other person the existence of the chest and its contents.

But it is not in a woman's nature to keep such secrets; and the Captain, who left her for days and days, did not reflect that she would seek for confidants elsewhere. For want of a female companion, she was compelled to bestow her sympathies upon Mr. Brock; who, as the Count's corporal, was much in his lodgings, and who did manage to survive the disappointment which he had experienced by Mrs. Catherine's refusal of him.

About two months after the infant's birth, the Captain, who was annoyed by its squalling, put it abroad to nurse, and dismissed its attendant. Mrs. Catherine now resumed her household duties, and was, as before, at once mistress and servant of the establishment. As such, she had the keys of the beer, and was pretty sure of the attentions of the Corporal; who became, as we have said, in the Count's absence, his lady's chief friend and companion. After the manner of ladies, she very

Digitized by Google

speedily confided to him all her domestic secrets: the causes of her former discontent; the Count's ill-treatment of her; the wicked names he called her; the prices that all her gowns had cost her; how he beat her; how much money he won and lost at play; how she had once pawned a coat for him; how he had four new ones, laced, and paid for; what was the best way of cleaning and keeping gold-lace, of making cherry-brandy, pickling salmon, &c. &c. Her *confidences* upon all these subjects used to follow each other in rapid succession; and Mr. Brock became, ere long, quite as well acquainted with the Captain's history for the last year as the Count himself: — for he was careless, and forgot things; women never do. They chronicle all the lover's small actions, his words, his headaches, the dresses he has worn, the things he has liked for dinner on certain days; — all which circumstances commonly are expunged from the male brain immediately after they have occurred, but remain fixed with the female.

To Brock, then, and to Brock only (for she knew no other soul), Mrs. Cat breathed, in strictest confidence, the history of the Count's winnings, and his way of disposing of them; how he kept his money screwed down in an iron chest in their room: and a very lucky fellow did Brock consider his officer for having such a large sum. He and Cat looked at the chest; it was small, but mighty strong, sure enough, and would defy picklocks and thieves. Well, if any man deserved money, the Captain did ("though he might buy me a few yards of that lace I love so," interrupted Cat), — if any man deserved money, he did, for he spent it like a prince, and his hand was always in his pocket.

It must now be stated that Monsieur de Galgenstein had, during Cat's seclusion, cast his eyes upon a young lady of good fortune, who frequented the Assembly at

Digitized by Google

Birmingham, and who was not a little smitten by his title and person. The "four new coats, laced, and paid for," as Cat said, had been purchased, most probably, by his Excellency for the purpose of dazzling the heiress; and he and the coats had succeeded so far as to win from the young woman an actual profession of love, and a promise of marriage provided Pa would consent. This was obtained, — for Pa was a tradesman; and I suppose every one of my readers has remarked how great an effect a title has on the lower classes. Yes, thank heaven! there is about a free-born Briton a cringing baseness, and lickspittle awe of rank, which does not exist under any tyranny in Europe, and is only to be found here and in America.

All these negotiations had been going on quite unknown to Cat; and, as the Captain had determined, before two months were out, to fling that young woman on the *pavé*, he was kind to her in the meanwhile: people always are when they are swindling you, or meditating an injury against you.

The poor girl had much too high an opinion of her own charms to suspect that the Count could be unfaithful to them, and had no notion of the plot that was formed against her. But Mr. Brock had: for he had seen many times a gilt coach with a pair of fat white horses ambling in the neighbourhood of the town, and the Captain on his black steed caracolling majestically by its side; and he had remarked a fat, pudgy, pale-haired woman treading heavily down the stairs of the Assembly, leaning on the Captain's arm: all these Mr. Brock had seen, not without reflection. Indeed, the Count one day, in great good-humour, had slapped him on the shoulder and told him that he was about speedily to purchase a regiment; when, by his great gods, Mr. Brock should have a pair of colours. Perhaps this

Digitized by Google

promise occasioned his silence to Mrs. Catherine hitherto; perhaps he never would have peached at all; and perhaps, therefore, this history would never have been written, but for a small circumstance which occurred at this period.

"What can you want with that drunken old Corporal always about your quarters?" said Mr. Trippet to the Count one day, as they sat over their wine, in the midst of a merry company, at the Captain's rooms.

"What!" said he. "Old Brock? The old thief has been more useful to me than many a better man. He is brave in a row as a lion, as cunning in intrigue as a fox; he can nose a dun at an inconceivable distance, and scent out a pretty woman be she behind ever so many stone walls. If a gentleman wants a good rascal now, I can recommend him. I am going to reform, you know, and must turn him out of my service."

"And pretty Mrs. Cat?"

"Oh, curse pretty Mrs. Cat! she may go too."

"And the brat?"

"Why, you have parishes, and what not, here in England. Egad! if a gentleman were called upon to keep all his children, there would be no living: no, stap my vitals! Crœsus could n't stand it."

"No, indeed," said Mr. Trippet: "you are right; and when a gentleman marries, he is bound in honour to give up such low connections as are useful when he is a bachelor."

"Of course; and give them up I will, when the sweet Mrs. Dripping is mine. As for the girl, you can have her, Tom Trippet, if you take a fancy to her; and as for the Corporal, he may be handed over to my successor in Cutts's: — for I will have a regiment to myself, that 's poz; and to take with me such a swindling, pimping, thieving, brandy-faced rascal as this Brock will

Digitized by Google

never do. Egad! he's a disgrace to the service. As it is, I've often a mind to have the superannuated vagabond drummed out of the corps."

Although this *résumé* of Mr. Brock's character and accomplishments was very just, it came perhaps with an ill grace from Count Gustavus Adolphus Maximilian, who had profited by all his qualities, and who certainly would never have given this opinion of them had he known that the door of his dining-parlour was open, and that the gallant Corporal, who was in the passage, could hear every syllable that fell from the lips of his commanding officer. We shall not say, after the fashion of the story-books, that Mr. Brock listened with a flashing eye and a distended nostril; that his chest heaved tumultuously, and that his hand fell down mechanically to his side, where it played with the brass handle of his sword. Mr. Kean would have gone through most of these bodily exercises had he been acting the part of a villain enraged and disappointed like Corporal Brock; but that gentleman walked away without any gestures of any kind, and as gently as possible. "He'll turn me out of the regiment, will he?" says he, quite *piano;* and then added (*con molta espressione*), "I'll do for him."

And it is to be remarked how generally, in cases of this nature, gentlemen stick to their word.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER III

IN WHICH A NARCOTIC IS ADMINISTERED, AND A GREAT DEAL OF GENTEEL SOCIETY DEPICTED

WHEN the Corporal, who had retreated to the street-door immediately on hearing the above conversation, returned to the Captain's lodgings and paid his respects to Mrs. Catherine, he found that lady in high good-humour. The Count had been with her, she said, along with a friend of his, Mr. Trippet; had promised her twelve yards of the lace she coveted so much; had vowed that the child should have as much more for a cloak; and had not left her until he had sat with her for an hour, or more, over a bowl of punch, which he made on purpose for her. Mr. Trippet stayed too. "A mighty pleasant man," said she; "only not very wise, and seemingly a good deal in liquor."

"A good deal indeed!" said the Corporal. "He was so tipsy just now, that he could hardly stand. He and his honour were talking to Nan Fantail in the market-place; and she pulled Trippet's wig off, for wanting to kiss her."

"The nasty fellow!" said Mrs. Cat, "to demean himself with such low people as Nan Fantail, indeed! Why, upon my conscience now, Corporal, it was but an hour ago that Mr. Trippet swore he never saw such a pair of eyes as mine, and would like to cut the Captain's throat for the love of me. Nan Fantail indeed!"

"Nan's an honest girl, Madam Catherine, and was a great favourite of the Captain's before some one else

Digitized by Google

came in his way. No one can say a word against her — not a word."

"And pray, Corporal, who ever did?" said Mrs. Cat, rather offended. "A nasty, angry slut! I wonder what the men can see in her?"

"She has got a smart way with her, sure enough; it 's what amuses the men, and ——"

"And what? You don't mean to say that my Max is fond of her *now?*" said Mrs. Catherine, looking very fierce.

"Oh, no; not at all: not of *her;* — that is ——"

"Not of *her!*" screamed she. "Of whom, then?"

"Oh, psha! nonsense! Of you, my dear, to be sure: who else should he care for? And, besides, what business is it of mine?" And herewith the Corporal began whistling, as if he would have no more of the conversation. But Mrs. Cat was not to be satisfied, — not she, and carried on her cross-questions.

"Why, look you," said the Corporal, after parrying many of these, — "Why, look you, I 'm an old fool, Catherine, and I *must* blab. That man has been the best friend I ever had, and so I was quiet; but I can't keep it in any longer, — no, hang me if I can! It 's my belief he 's acting like a rascal by you: he deceives you, Catherine; he 's a scoundrel, Mrs. Hall, that 's the truth on 't."

Catherine prayed him to tell all he knew; and he resumed.

"He wants you off his hands; he 's sick of you, and so brought here that fool Tom Trippet, who has taken a fancy to you. He has not the courage to turn you out of doors like a man; though in-doors he can treat you like a beast. But I 'll tell you what he 'll do. In a month he will go to Coventry, or pretend to go there, on recruiting business. No such thing, Mrs. Hall: he 's

Digitized by Google

going on *marriage* business; and he'll leave you without a farthing, to starve or to rot, for him. It's all arranged, I tell you: in a month, you are to be starved into becoming Tom Trippet's mistress; and his honour is to marry rich Miss Dripping, the twenty-thousand-pounder from London; and to purchase a regiment; — and to get old Brock drummed out of Cutts's too," said the Corporal, under his breath. But he might have spoken out, if he chose; for the poor young woman had sunk on the ground in a real honest fit.

"I thought I should give it her," said Mr. Brock, as he procured a glass of water; and, lifting her on to a sofa, sprinkled the same over her. "Hang it! how pretty she is."

. . . . . .

When Mrs. Catherine came to herself again, Brock's tone with her was kind, and almost feeling. Nor did the poor wench herself indulge in any subsequent shiverings and hysterics, such as usually follow the fainting-fits of persons of higher degree. She pressed him for further explanations, which he gave, and to which she listened with a great deal of calmness; nor did many tears, sobs, sighs, or exclamations of sorrow or anger escape from her: only when the Corporal was taking his leave, and said to her point-blank,—"Well, Mrs. Catherine, and what do you intend to do?" she did not reply a word; but gave a look which made him exclaim, on leaving the room,—

"By heavens! the woman means murder! I would not be the Holofernes to lie by the side of such a Judith as that — not I!" And he went his way, immersed in deep thought. When the Captain returned at night, she did not speak to him; and when he swore at her for being sulky, she only said she had a headache, and

Digitized by Google

was dreadfully ill: with which excuse Gustavus Adolphus seemed satisfied, and left her to herself.

He saw her the next morning for a moment: he was going a-shooting.

Catherine had no friend, as is usual in tragedies and romances, — no mysterious sorceress of her acquaintance to whom she could apply for poison,— so she went simply to the apothecaries, pretending at each that she had a dreadful toothache, and procuring from them as much laudanum as she thought would suit her purpose.

When she went home again, she seemed almost gay. Mr. Brock complimented her upon the alteration in her appearance; and she was enabled to receive the Captain at his return from shooting in such a manner as made him remark that she had got rid of her sulks of the morning, and might sup with them, if she chose to keep her good-humour. The supper was got ready, and the gentlemen had the punch-bowl when the cloth was cleared, — Mrs. Catherine, with her delicate hands, preparing the liquor.

It is useless to describe the conversation that took place, or to reckon the number of bowls that were emptied; or to tell how Mr. Trippet, who was one of the guests, and declined to play at cards when some of the others began, chose to remain by Mrs. Catherine's side, and make violent love to her. All this might be told, and the account, however faithful, would not be very pleasing. No, indeed! And here, though we are only in the third chapter of this history, we feel almost sick of the characters that appear in it, and the adventures which they are called upon to go through. But how can we help ourselves? The public will hear of nothing but rogues; and the only way in which poor authors, who must live, can act honestly by the public and themselves, is to paint such thieves as they are:

Digitized by Google

not dandy, poetical, rose-water thieves; but real downright scoundrels, leading scoundrelly lives, drunken, profligate, dissolute, low; as scoundrels will be. They don't quote Plato, like Eugene Aram; or live like gentlemen, and sing the pleasantest ballads in the world, like jolly Dick Turpin; or prate eternally about τὸ καλὸν, like that precious canting Maltravers, whom we all of us have read about and pitied; or die whitewashed saints, like poor "Biss Dadsy" in "Oliver Twist." No, my dear Madam, you and your daughters have no right to admire and sympathise with any such persons, fictitious or real: you ought to be made cordially to detest, scorn, loathe, abhor, and abominate all people of this kidney. Men of genius like those whose works we have above alluded to, have no business to make these characters interesting or agreeable; to be feeding your morbid fancies, or indulging their own, with such monstrous food. For our parts, young ladies, we beg you to bottle up your tears, and not waste a single drop of them on any one of the heroes or heroines in this history: they are all rascals, every soul of them, and behave "as sich." Keep your sympathy for those who deserve it: don't carry it, for preference, to the Old Bailey, and grow maudlin over the company assembled there.

Just, then, have the kindness to fancy that the conversation which took place over the bowls of punch which Mrs. Catherine prepared, was such as might be expected to take place where the host was a dissolute, dare-devil, libertine captain of dragoons, the guests for the most part of the same class, and the hostess a young woman originally from a country alehouse, and for the present mistress to the entertainer of the society. They talked, and they drank, and they grew tipsy; and very little worth hearing occurred during the course of the whole evening. Mr. Brock officiated, half as the ser-

Digitized by Google

vant, half as the companion of the society. Mr. Thomas Trippet made violent love to Mrs. Catherine, while her lord and master was playing at dice with the other gentlemen: and on this night, strange to say, the Captain's fortune seemed to desert him. The Warwickshire Squire, from whom he had won so much, had an amazing run of good luck. The Captain called perpetually for more drink, and higher stakes, and lost almost every throw. Three hundred, four hundred, six hundred — all his winnings of the previous months were swallowed up in the course of a few hours. The Corporal looked on; and, to do him justice, seemed very grave, as, sum by sum, the Squire scored down the Count's losses on the paper before him.

Most of the company had taken their hats and staggered off. The Squire and Mr. Trippet were the only two that remained, the latter still lingering by Mrs. Catherine's sofa and table; and as she, as we have stated, had been employed all the evening in mixing the liquor for the gamesters, he was at the headquarters of love and drink, and had swallowed so much of each as hardly to be able to speak.

The dice went rattling on; the candles were burning dim, with great long wicks. Mr. Trippet could hardly see the Captain, and thought, as far as his muzzy reason would let him, that the Captain could not see him: so he rose from his chair as well as he could, and fell down on Mrs. Catherine's sofa. His eyes were fixed, his face was pale, his jaw hung down; and he flung out his arms and said, in a maudlin voice, "Oh, you byoo-oo-oo-tiffle Cathrine, I must have a kick-kick-iss."

"Beast!" said Mrs. Catherine, and pushed him away. The drunken wretch fell off the sofa, and on to the floor, where he stayed; and, after snorting out some unintelligible sounds, went to sleep.

Digitized by Google

The dice went rattling on; the candles were burning dim, with great long wicks.

"Seven's the main," cried the Count. "Four. Three to two against the caster."

"Ponies," said the Warwickshire Squire.

Rattle, rattle, rattle, rattle, clatter, *nine*. Clap, clap, clap, clap, *eleven*. Clutter, clutter, clutter, clutter: "Seven it is," says the Warwickshire Squire. "That makes eight hundred, Count."

"One throw for two hundred," said the Count. "But stop! Cat, give us some more punch."

Mrs. Cat came forward; she looked a little pale, and her hand trembled somewhat. "Here is the punch, Max," said she. It was steaming hot, in a large glass. "Don't drink it all," said she; "leave me some."

"How dark it is!" said the Count, eyeing it.

"It's the brandy," says Cat.

"Well, here goes! Squire, curse you! here's your health, and bad luck to you!" and he gulped off more than half the liquor at a draught. But presently he put down the glass and cried, "What infernal poison is this, Cat?"

"Poison!" said she. "It's no poison. Give me the glass." And she pledged Max, and drank a little of it. "'T is good punch, Max, and of my brewing; I don't think you will ever get any better." And she went back to the sofa again, and sat down, and looked at the players.

Mr. Brock looked at her white face and fixed eyes with a grim kind of curiosity. The Count sputtered, and cursed the horrid taste of the punch still; but he presently took the box, and made his threatened throw.

As before, the Squire beat him; and having booked his winnings, rose from table as well as he might,

Digitized by Google

and besought Corporal Brock to lead him downstairs; which Mr. Brock did.

Liquor had evidently stupefied the Count: he sat with his head between his hands, muttering wildly about ill-luck, seven's the main, bad punch, and so on. The street-door banged to; and the steps of Brock and the Squire were heard, until they could be heard no more.

"Max," said she; but he did not answer. "Max," said she again, laying her hand on his shoulder.

"Curse you," said that gentleman, "keep off, and don't be laying your paws upon me. Go to bed, you jade, or to ——, for what I care; and give me first some more punch — a gallon more punch, do you hear?"

The gentleman, by the curses at the commencement of this little speech, and the request contained at the end of it, showed that his losses vexed him, and that he was anxious to forget them temporarily.

"Oh, Max!" whimpered Mrs. Cat, "you — don't — want — any more punch?"

"Don't! Shan't I be drunk in my own house, you cursed whimpering jade you? Get out!" And with this the Captain proceeded to administer a blow upon Mrs. Catherine's cheek.

Contrary to her custom, she did not avenge it, or seek to do so, as on the many former occasions when disputes of this nature had arisen between the Count and her; but now Mrs. Catherine fell on her knees, and clasping her hands, and looking pitifully in the Count's face, cried, "Oh, Count, forgive me, forgive me!"

"Forgive you! What for? Because I slapped your face? Ha, ha! I'll forgive you again, if you don't mind."

"Oh, no, no, no!" said she, wringing her hands. "It is n't that. Max, dear Max, will you forgive me? It is n't the blow — I don't mind that; it's ——"

Digitized by Google

"It 's what, you — maudlin fool?"

"*It 's the punch!*"

The Count, who was more than half-seas-over, here assumed an air of much tipsy gravity. "The punch! No, I never will forgive you that last glass of punch. Of all the foul, beastly drinks I ever tasted, that was the worst. No, I never will forgive you that punch."

"Oh, it is n't that, it is n't that!" said she.

"I tell you it is that, —— you! That punch, I say that punch was no better than paw—aw—oison." And here the Count's head sank back, and he fell to snore.

"*It was poison!*" said she.

"*What!*" screamed he, waking up at once, and spurning her away from him. "What, you infernal murderess, have you killed me?"

"Oh, Max! — don't kill me, Max! It was laudanum — indeed it was. You were going to be married, and I was furious, and I went and got ——"

"Hold your tongue, you fiend," roared out the Count; and with more presence of mind than politeness, he flung the remainder of the liquor (and, indeed, the glass with it) at the head of Mrs. Catherine. But the poisoned chalice missed its mark, and fell right on the nose of Mr. Tom Trippet, who was left asleep and unobserved under the table.

Bleeding, staggering, swearing, indeed a ghastly sight, up sprung Mr. Trippet, and drew his rapier. "Come on," says he; "never say die! What 's the row? I 'm ready for a dozen of you." And he made many blind and furious passes about the room.

"Curse you, we 'll die together!" shouted the Count, as he too pulled out his toledo, and sprung at Mrs. Catherine.

"Help! murder! thieves!" shrieked she. "Save me,

Digitized by Google

Mr. Trippet, save me!" and she placed that gentleman between herself and the Count, and then made for the door of the bed-room, and gained it, and bolted it.

"Out of the way, Trippet," roared the Count — "out of the way, you drunken beast! I'll murder her, I will — I'll have the devil's life." And here he gave a swinging cut at Mr. Trippet's sword: it sent the weapon whirling clean out of his hand, and through a window into the street.

"Take my life, then," said Mr. Trippet: "I'm drunk, but I'm a man, and, damme! will never say die."

"I don't want your life, you stupid fool. Hark you, Trippet, wake and be sober, if you can. That woman has heard of my marriage with Miss Dripping."

"Twenty thousand pound," ejaculated Trippet.

"She has been jealous, I tell you, and *poisoned* us. She has put laudanum into the punch."

"What, in *my* punch?" said Trippet, growing quite sober, and losing his courage. "O Lord! O Lord!"

"Don't stand howling there, but run for a doctor; 't is our only chance." And away ran Mr. Trippet, as if the deuce were at his heels.

The Count had forgotten his murderous intentions regarding his mistress, or had deferred them at least, under the consciousness of his own pressing danger. And it must be said, in the praise of a man who had fought for and against Marlborough and Tallard, that his courage in this trying and novel predicament never for a moment deserted him, but that he showed the greatest daring, as well as ingenuity, in meeting and averting the danger. He flew to the sideboard, where were the relics of a supper, and seizing the mustard and salt pots, and a bottle of oil, he emptied them all into a jug, into which he further poured a vast quantity of hot water. This pleasing mixture he then, without a mo-

Digitized by Google

ment's hesitation, placed to his lips, and swallowed as much of it as nature would allow him. But when he had imbibed about a quart, the anticipated effect was produced, and he was enabled, by the power of this ingenious extemporaneous emetic, to get rid of much of the poison which Mrs. Catherine had administered to him.

He was employed in these efforts when the doctor entered, along with Mr. Brock and Mr. Trippet; who was not a little pleased to hear that the poisoned punch had not in all probability been given to him. He was recommended to take some of the Count's mixture, as a precautionary measure; but this he refused, and retired home, leaving the Count under charge of the physician and his faithful corporal.

It is not necessary to say what further remedies were employed by them to restore the Captain to health; but after some time the doctor, pronouncing that the danger was, he hoped, averted, recommended that his patient should be put to bed, and that somebody should sit by him; which Brock promised to do.

"That she-devil will murder me, if you don't," gasped the poor Count. "You must turn her out of the bed-room; or break open the door, if she refuses to let you in."

And this step was found to be necessary; for, after shouting many times, and in vain, Mr. Brock found a small iron bar (indeed he had the instrument for many days in his pocket), and forced the lock. The room was empty, the window was open: the pretty barmaid of the "Bugle" had fled.

"The chest," said the Count—"is the chest safe?"

The Corporal flew to the bed, under which it was screwed, and looked, and said, "It *is* safe, thank heaven!" The window was closed. The Captain, who

Digitized by Google

was too weak to stand without help, was undressed and put to bed. The Corporal sat down by his side; slumber stole over the eyes of the patient; and his wakeful nurse marked with satisfaction the progress of the beneficent restorer of health.

. . . . . .

When the Captain awoke, as he did some time afterwards, he found, very much to his surprise, that a gag had been placed in his mouth, and that the Corporal was in the act of wheeling his bed to another part of the room. He attempted to move, and gave utterance to such unintelligible sounds as could issue through a silk handkerchief.

"If your honour stirs or cries out in the least, I will cut your honour's throat," said the Corporal.

And then, having recourse to his iron bar (the reader will now see why he was provided with such an implement, for he had been meditating this *coup* for some days), he proceeded first to attempt to burst the lock of the little iron chest in which the Count kept his treasure, and failing in this, to unscrew it from the ground; which operation he performed satisfactorily.

"You see, Count," said he, calmly, "when rogues fall out, there 's the deuce to pay. You 'll have me drummed out of the regiment, will you? I 'm going to leave it of my own accord, look you, and to live like a gentleman for the rest of my days. *Schlafen sie wohl*, noble Captain: *bon repos*. The Squire will be with you pretty early in the morning, to ask for the money you owe him."

. . . . . .

With these sarcastic observations Mr. Brock departed; not by the window, as Mrs. Catherine had done, but by the door, quietly, and so into the street. And when, the next morning, the doctor came to visit

Digitized by Google

his patient, he brought with him a story how, at the dead of night, Mr. Brock had roused the ostler at the stables where the Captain's horses were kept — had told him that Mrs. Catherine had poisoned the Count, and had run off with a thousand pounds; and how he and all lovers of justice ought to scour the country in pursuit of the criminal. For this end Mr. Brock mounted the Count's best horse — that very animal on which he had carried away Mrs. Catherine: and thus, on a single night, Count Maximilian had lost his mistress, his money, his horse, his corporal, and was very near losing his life.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER IV

IN WHICH MRS. CATHERINE BECOMES AN HONEST WOMAN AGAIN

IN this woful plight, moneyless, wifeless, horseless, corporalless, with a gag in his mouth and a rope round his body, are we compelled to leave the gallant Galgenstein, until his friends and the progress of this history shall deliver him from his durance. Mr. Brock's adventures on the Captain's horse must likewise be pretermitted; for it is our business to follow Mrs. Catherine through the window by which she made her escape, and among the various chances that befell her.

She had one cause to congratulate herself, — that she had not her baby at her back; for the infant was safely housed under the care of a nurse, to whom the Captain was answerable. Beyond this her prospects were but dismal: no home to fly to, but a few shillings in her pocket, and a whole heap of injuries and dark revengeful thoughts in her bosom: it was a sad task to her to look either backwards or forwards. Whither was she to fly? How to live? What good chance was to befriend her? There was an angel watching over the steps of Mrs. Cat — not a good one, I think, but one of those from that unnameable place, who have their many subjects here on earth, and often are pleased to extricate them from worse perplexities.

Mrs. Cat, now, had not committed murder, but as bad as murder; and as she felt not the smallest repentance

Digitized by Google

in her heart — as she had, in the course of her life and connection with the Captain, performed and gloried in a number of wicked coquetries, idlenesses, vanities, lies, fits of anger, slanders, foul abuses, and what not — she was fairly bound over to this dark angel whom we have alluded to; and he dealt with her, and aided her, as one of his own children.

I do not mean to say that, in this strait, he appeared to her in the likeness of a gentleman in black, and made her sign her name in blood to a document conveying over to him her soul, in exchange for certain conditions to be performed by him. Such diabolical bargains have always appeared to me unworthy of the astute personage who is supposed to be one of the parties to them; and who would scarcely be fool enough to pay dearly for that which he can have in a few years for nothing. It is not, then, to be supposed that a demon of darkness appeared to Mrs. Cat, and led her into a flaming chariot, harnessed by dragons, and careering through air at the rate of a thousand leagues a minute. No such thing: the vehicle that was sent to aid her was one of a much more vulgar description.

The "Liverpool carryvan," then, which in the year 1706 used to perform the journey between London and that place in ten days, left Birmingham about an hour after Mrs. Catherine had quitted that town; and as she sat weeping on a hillside, and plunged in bitter meditation, the lumbering, jingling vehicle overtook her. The coachman was marching by the side of his horses, and encouraging them to maintain their pace of two miles an hour; the passengers had some of them left the vehicle, in order to walk up the hill; and the carriage had arrived at the top of it, and, meditating a brisk trot down the declivity, waited there until the lagging passengers should arrive: when Jehu, casting a good-

Digitized by Google

natured glance upon Mrs. Catherine, asked the pretty maid whence she was come, and whether she would like a ride in his carriage. To the latter of which questions Mrs. Catherine replied truly yes; to the former, her answer was that she had come from Stratford: whereas, as we very well know, she had lately quitted Birmingham.

"Hast thee seen a woman pass this way, on a black horse, with a large bag of goold over the saddle?" said Jehu, preparing to mount upon the roof of his coach.

"No, indeed," said Mrs. Cat.

"Nor a trooper on another horse after her — no? Well, there be a mortal row down Birmingham way about sich a one. She have killed, they say, nine gentlemen at supper, and have strangled a German prince in bed. She have robbed him of twenty thousand guineas, and have rode away on a black horse."

"That can't be I," said Mrs. Cat, naïvely, "for I have but three shillings and a groat."

"No, it can't be thee, truly, for where 's your bag of goold? and, besides, thee hast got too pretty a face to do such wicked things as to kill nine gentlemen and strangle a German prince."

"Law, coachman," said Mrs. Cat, blushing archly — "Law, coachman, *do* you think so?" The girl would have been pleased with a compliment even on her way to be hanged; and the parley ended by Mrs. Catherine stepping into the carriage, where there was room for eight people at least, and where two or three individuals had already taken their places.

For these Mrs. Catherine had in the first place to make a story, which she did; and a very glib one for a person of her years and education. Being asked whither she was bound, and how she came to be alone

Digitized by Google

of a morning sitting by a road-side, she invented a neat history suitable to the occasion, which elicited much interest from her fellow-passengers: one in particular, a young man, who had caught a glimpse of her face under her hood, was very tender in his attentions to her.

But whether it was that she had been too much fatigued by the occurrences of the past day and sleepless night, or whether the little laudanum which she had drunk a few hours previously now began to act upon her, certain it is that Mrs. Cat now suddenly grew sick, feverish, and extraordinarily sleepy; and in this state she continued for many hours, to the pity of all her fellow-travellers. At length the "carryvan" reached the inn, where horses and passengers were accustomed to rest for a few hours, and to dine; and Mrs. Catherine was somewhat awakened by the stir of the passengers, and the friendly voice of the inn-servant welcoming them to dinner. The gentleman who had been smitten by her beauty now urged her very politely to descend; which, taking the protection of his arm, she accordingly did.

He made some very gallant speeches to her as she stepped out; and she must have been very much occupied by them, or rapt up in her own thoughts, or stupefied by sleep, fever, and opium, for she did not take any heed of the place into which she was going: which had she done, she would probably have preferred remaining in the coach, dinnerless and ill. Indeed, the inn into which she was about to make her entrance was no other than the "Bugle," from which she set forth at the commencement of this history; and which then, as now, was kept by her relative, the thrifty Mrs. Score. That good landlady, seeing a lady, in a smart hood and cloak, leaning, as if faint, upon the arm of a gentleman of good appearance, concluded them to be man and wife, and

Digitized by Google

folks of quality too; and with much discrimination, as well as sympathy, led them through the public kitchen to her own private parlour, or bar, where she handed the lady an armchair, and asked what she would like to drink. By this time and indeed at the very moment she heard her aunt's voice, Mrs. Catherine was aware of her situation; and when her companion retired, and the landlady with much officiousness insisted on removing her hood, she was quite prepared for the screech of surprise which Mrs. Score gave on dropping it, exclaiming, "Why, law bless us, it 's our Catherine!"

"I 'm very ill, and tired, aunt," said Cat; "and would give the world for a few hours' sleep."

"A few hours and welcome, my love, and a sack-posset too. You do look sadly tired and poorly, sure enough. Ah, Cat, Cat! you great ladies are sad rakes, I do believe. I wager now, that with all your balls, and carriages, and fine clothes, you are neither so happy nor so well as when you lived with your poor old aunt, who used to love you so." And with these gentle words, and an embrace or two, which Mrs. Catherine wondered at, and permitted, she was conducted to that very bed which the Count had occupied a year previously, and undressed, and laid in it, and affectionately tucked up, by her aunt, who marvelled at the fineness of her clothes, as she removed them piece by piece; and when she saw that in Mrs. Catherine's pocket there was only the sum of three-and-fourpence, said, archly, "There was no need of money, for the Captain took care of that."

Mrs. Cat did not undeceive her; and deceived Mrs. Score certainly was, — for she imagined the well-dressed gentleman who led Cat from the carriage was no other than the Count; and, as she had heard, from time to time, exaggerated reports of the splendour of the establishment which he kept up, she was induced to look

Digitized by Google

upon her niece with the very highest respect, and to treat her as if she were a fine lady. "And so she *is* a fine lady," Mrs. Score had said months ago, when some of these flattering stories reached her, and she had overcome her first fury at Catherine's elopement. "The girl was very cruel to leave me; but we must recollect that she is as good as married to a nobleman, and must all forget and forgive, you know."

This speech had been made to Doctor Dobbs, who was in the habit of taking a pipe and a tankard at the "Bugle," and it had been roundly reprobated by the worthy divine; who told Mrs. Score that the crime of Catherine was only the more heinous, if it had been committed from interested motives; and protested that, were she a princess, he would never speak to her again. Mrs. Score thought and pronounced the Doctor's opinion to be very bigoted; indeed, she was one of those persons who have a marvellous respect for prosperity, and a corresponding scorn for ill-fortune. When, therefore, she returned to the public room, she went graciously to the gentleman who had led Mrs. Catherine from the carriage, and with a knowing curtsey welcomed him to the "Bugle;" told him that his lady would not come to dinner, but bade her say, with her best love to his lordship, that the ride had fatigued her, and that she would lie in bed for an hour or two.

This speech was received with much wonder by his lordship; who was, indeed, no other than a Liverpool tailor going to London to learn fashions; but he only smiled, and did not undeceive the landlady, who herself went off, smilingly, to bustle about dinner.

The two or three hours allotted to that meal by the liberal coachmasters of those days passed away, and Mr. Coachman, declaring that his horses were now rested enough, and that they had twelve miles to ride,

Digitized by Google

put the steeds to, and summoned the passengers. Mrs. Score, who had seen with much satisfaction that her niece was really ill, and her fever more violent, and hoped to have her for many days an inmate in her house, now came forward, and casting upon the Liverpool tailor a look of profound but respectful melancholy, said, "My Lord (for I recollect your lordship quite well), the lady upstairs is so ill, that it would be a sin to move her: had I not better tell coachman to take down your lordship's trunks, and the lady's, and make you a bed in the next room?"

Very much to her surprise, this proposition was received with a roar of laughter. "Madam," said the person addressed, "I'm not a lord, but a tailor and draper; and as for that young woman, before to-day I never set eyes on her."

"*What!*" screamed out Mrs. Score. "Are not you the Count? Do you mean to say that you a'n't Cat's——? *Do* you mean to say that you did n't order her bed, and that you won't pay this here little bill?" And with this she produced a document, by which the Count's lady was made her debtor in a sum of half-a-guinea.

These passionate words excited more and more laughter. "Pay it, my lord," said the coachman; "and then come along, for time presses." "Our respects to her ladyship," said one passenger. "Tell her my lord can't wait," said another; and with much merriment one and all quitted the hotel, entered the coach, and rattled off.

Dumb — pale with terror and rage — bill in hand, Mrs. Score had followed the company; but when the coach disappeared, her senses returned. Back she flew into the inn, overturning the ostler, not deigning to answer Dr. Dobbs (who, from behind soft tobacco-

Digitized by Google

fumes, mildly asked the reason of her disturbance), and, bounding upstairs like a fury, she rushed into the room where Catherine lay.

"Well, madam!" said she, in her highest key, "do you mean that you have come into this here house to swindle me? Do you dare for to come with your airs here, and call yourself a nobleman's lady, and sleep in the best bed, when you're no better nor a common tramper? I'll thank you, ma'am, to get out, ma'am. I'll have no sick paupers in this house, ma'am. You know your way to the workhouse, ma'am, and there I'll trouble you for to go." And here Mrs. Score proceeded quickly to pull off the bedclothes; and poor Cat arose, shivering with fright and fever.

She had no spirit to answer, as she would have done the day before, when an oath from any human being would have brought half-a-dozen from her in return; or a knife, or a plate, or a leg of mutton, if such had been to her hand. She had no spirit left for such repartees; but in reply to the above words of Mrs. Score, and a great many more of the same kind — which are not necessary for our history, but which that lady uttered with inconceivable shrillness and volubility, the poor wench could say little, — only sob and shiver, and gather up the clothes again, crying, "Oh, aunt, don't speak unkind to me! I'm very unhappy, and very ill!"

"Ill, you strumpet! ill, be hanged! Ill is as ill does; and if you are ill, it's only what you merit. Get out! dress yourself — tramp! Get to the workhouse, and don't come to cheat me any more! Dress yourself — do you hear? Satin petticoat forsooth, and lace to her smock!"

"Poor, wretched, chattering, burning, shivering, Catherine huddled on her clothes as well as she might: she seemed hardly to know or see what she was doing,

Digitized by Google

and did not reply a single word to the many that the landlady let fall. Cat tottered down the narrow stairs, and through the kitchen, and to the door; which she caught hold of, and paused awhile, and looked into Mrs. Score's face, as for one more chance. "Get out, you nasty trull!" said that lady, sternly, with arms akimbo; and poor Catherine, with a most piteous scream and outgush of tears, let go of the door-post and staggered away into the road.

. . . . . .

"Why, no — yes — no — it is poor Catherine Hall, as I live!" said somebody starting up, shoving aside Mrs. Score very rudely, and running into the road, wig off and pipe in hand. It was honest Doctor Dobbs; and the result of his interview with Mrs. Cat was, that he gave up for ever smoking his pipe at the "Bugle;" and that she lay sick of a fever for some weeks in his house.

. . . . . .

Over this part of Mrs. Cat's history we shall be as brief as possible; for, to tell the truth, nothing immoral occurred during her whole stay at the good Doctor's house; and we are not going to insult the reader by offering him silly pictures of piety, cheerfulness, good sense, and simplicity; which are milk-and-water virtues after all, and have no relish with them like a good strong vice, highly peppered. Well, to be short: Dr. Dobbs, though a profound theologian, was a very simple gentleman; and before Mrs. Cat had been a month in the house, he had learned to look upon her as one of the most injured and repentant characters in the world; and had, with Mrs. Dobbs, resolved many plans for the future welfare of the young Magdalen. "She was but sixteen, my love, recollect," said the Doctor; "she was carried off, not by her own wish either. The Count

Digitized by Google

swore he would marry her; and, though she did not leave him until that monster tried to poison her, yet think what a fine Christian spirit the poor girl has shown! she forgives him as heartily — more heartily, I am sure, than I do Mrs. Score for turning her adrift in that wicked way." The reader will perceive some difference in the Doctor's statement and ours, which we assure him is the true one; but the fact is, the honest rector had had his tale from Mrs. Cat, and it was not in his nature to doubt, if she had told him a history ten times more wonderful.

The reverend gentleman and his wife then laid their heads together; and, recollecting something of John Hayes's former attachment to Mrs. Cat, thought that it might be advantageously renewed, should Hayes be still constant. Having very adroitly sounded Catherine (so adroitly, indeed, as to ask her "whether she would like to marry John Hayes?"), that young woman had replied, "No. She had loved John Hayes — he had been her early, only love; but she was fallen now, and not good enough for him." And this made the Dobbs family admire her more and more, and cast about for means to bring the marriage to pass.

Hayes was away from the village when Mrs. Cat had arrived there; but he did not fail to hear of her illness, and how her aunt had deserted her, and the good Doctor taken her in. The worthy Doctor himself met Mr. Hayes on the green; and, telling him that some repairs were wanting in his kitchen, begged him to step in and examine them. Hayes first said no, plump, and then no, gently; and then pished, and then psha'd; and then, trembling very much, went in: and there sat Mrs. Catherine, trembling very much too.

What passed between them? If your ladyship is anxious to know, think of that morning when Sir John

Digitized by Google

himself popped the question. Could there be anything more stupid than the conversation which took place? Such stuff is not worth repeating: no, not when uttered by people in the very genteelest of company; as for the amorous dialogue of a carpenter and an ex-barmaid, it is worse still. Suffice it to say, that Mr. Hayes, who had had a year to recover from his passion, and had, to all appearances, quelled it, was over head and ears again the very moment he saw Mrs. Cat, and had all his work to do again.

Whether the Doctor knew what was going on, I can't say; but this matter is certain, that every evening Hayes was now in the rectory kitchen, or else walking abroad with Mrs. Catherine: and whether she ran away with him, or he with her, I shall not make it my business to inquire; but certainly at the end of three months (which must be crowded up into this one little sentence), another elopement took place in the village. "I should have prevented it, certainly," said Dr. Dobbs —whereat his wife smiled; "but the young people kept the matter a secret from me." And so he would, had he known it; but though Mrs. Dobbs had made several attempts to acquaint him with the precise hour and method of the intended elopement, he peremptorily ordered her to hold her tongue. The fact is, that the matter had been discussed by the rector's lady many times. "Young Hayes," would she say, "has a pretty little fortune and trade of his own; he is an only son, and may marry as he likes; and though not specially handsome, generous, or amiable, has an undeniable love for Cat (who, you know, must not be particular), and the sooner she marries him, I think, the better. They can't be married at our church, you know, and——" "Well," said the Doctor, "if they are married elsewhere, *I* can't help it, and know nothing about it, look

Digitized by Google

you." And upon this hint the elopement took place: which, indeed, was peaceably performed early one Sunday morning about a month after; Mrs. Hall getting behind Mr. Hayes on a pillion, and all the children of the parsonage giggling behind the window-blinds to see the pair go off.

During this month Mr. Hayes had caused the banns to be published at the town of Worcester; judging rightly that in a great town they would cause no such remark as in a solitary village, and thither he conducted his lady. O ill-starred John Hayes! whither do the dark fates lead you? O foolish Dr. Dobbs, to forget that young people ought to honour their parents, and to yield to silly Mrs. Dobbs's ardent propensity for making matches!

. . . . . .

The *London Gazette* of the 1st April, 1706, contains a proclamation by the Queen for putting into execution an Act of Parliament for the encouragement and increase of seamen, and for the better and speedier manning of her Majesty's fleet, which authorises all justices to issue warrants to constables, petty constables, head-boroughs, and tything-men, to enter, and if need be, to break open the doors of any houses where they shall believe deserting seamen to be; and for the further increase and encouragement of the navy, to take able-bodied landsmen when seamen fail. This Act, which occupies four columns of the *Gazette*, and another of similar length and meaning for pressing men into the army, need not be quoted at length here; but caused a mighty stir throughout the kingdom at the time when it was in force.

As one has seen or heard, after the march of a great army, a number of rogues and loose characters bring up the rear; in like manner, at the tail of a great measure of State, follow many roguish personal interests,

Digitized by Google

which are protected by the main body. The great measure of Reform, for instance, carried along with it much private jobbing and swindling — as could be shown were we not inclined to deal mildly with the Whigs; and this Enlistment Act, which, in order to maintain the British glories in Flanders, dealt most cruelly with the British people in England (it is not the first time that a man has been pinched at home to make a fine appearance abroad), created a great company of rascals and informers throughout the land, who lived upon it; or upon extortion from those who were subject to it, or not being subject to it were frightened into the belief that they were.

When Mr. Hayes and his lady had gone through the marriage ceremony at Worcester, the former, concluding that at such a place lodging and food might be procured at a cheaper rate, looked about carefully for the meanest public-house in the town, where he might deposit his bride.

In the kitchen of this inn, a party of men were drinking; and, as Mrs. Hayes declined, with a proper sense of her superiority, to eat in company with such low fellows, the landlady showed her and her husband to an inner apartment, where they might be served in private.

The kitchen party seemed, indeed, not such as a lady would choose to join. There was one huge lanky fellow, that looked like a soldier, and had a halberd; another was habited in a sailor's costume, with a fascinating patch over one eye; and a third, who seemed the leader of the gang, was a stout man in a sailor's frock and a horseman's jack-boots, whom one might fancy, if he were anything, to be a horse-marine.

Of one of these worthies, Mrs. Hayes thought she knew the figure and voice; and she found her conjectures were true, when, all of a sudden, three people,

Digitized by Google

THE *Interrupted Marriage*

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

without "with your leave" or "by your leave," burst into the room, into which she and her spouse had retired. At their head was no other than her old friend, Mr. Peter Brock; he had his sword drawn, and his finger to his lips, enjoining silence, as it were, to Mrs. Catherine. He with the patch on his eye seized incontinently on Mr. Hayes; the tall man with the halberd kept the door; two or three heroes supported the one-eyed man; who, with a loud voice, exclaimed, "Down with your arms — no resistance! you are my prisoner, in the Queen's name!"

And here, at this lock, we shall leave the whole company until the next chapter; which may possibly explain what they were.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER V

CONTAINS MR. BROCK'S AUTOBIOGRAPHY, AND OTHER MATTER

"YOU don't sure believe these men?" said Mrs. Hayes, as soon as the first alarm caused by the irruption of Mr. Brock and his companions had subsided. "These are no magistrate's men: it is but a trick to rob you of your money, John."

"I will never give up a farthing of it!" screamed Hayes.

"Yonder fellow," continued Mrs. Catherine, "I know, for all his drawn sword and fierce looks; his name is ——"

"Wood, madam, at your service!" said Mr. Brock. "I am follower to Mr. Justice Gobble, of this town: a'n't I, Tim?" said Mr. Brock to the tall halberd-man who was keeping the door.

"Yes, indeed," said Tim, archly; "we 're all followers of his honour, Justice Gobble."

"Certainly!" said the one-eyed man.

"Of course!" cried the man in the nightcap.

"I suppose, madam, you're satisfied *now?*" continued Mr. Brock *a.* Wood. "You can't deny the testimony of gentlemen like these; and our commission is to apprehend all able-bodied male persons who can give no good account of themselves, and enrol them in the service of her Majesty. Look at this Mr. Hayes" (who stood trembling in his shoes). "Can there be a bolder, properer, straighter gentleman? We'll have him for a grenadier before the day's over!"

Digitized by Google

"Take heart, John — don't be frightened. Psha! I tell you I know the man," cried out Mrs. Hayes: "he is only here to extort money."

"Oh, for that matter, I *do* think I recollect the lady. Let me see? where was it? At Birmingham, I think, — ay, at Birmingham, — about the time when they tried to murder Count Gal——"

"Oh, sir!" here cried Madam Hayes, dropping her voice at once from a tone of scorn to one of gentlest entreaty, "what is it you want with my husband? I know not, indeed, if ever I saw you before. For what do you seize him? How much will you take to release him, and let us go? Name the sum; he is rich, and ——"

"*Rich*, Catherine!" cried Hayes. "Rich! — O heavens! Sir, I have nothing but my hands to support me: I am a poor carpenter, sir, working under my father!"

"He can give twenty guineas to be free; I know he can!" said Mrs. Cat.

"I have but a guinea to carry me home," sighed out Hayes.

"But you have twenty at home, John," said his wife. "Give these brave gentlemen a writing to your mother, and she will pay; and you will let us free then, gentlemen — won't you?"

"When the money's paid, yes," said the leader, Mr. Brock.

"Oh, in course," echoed the tall man with the halberd. "What's a thrifling detintion, my dear?" continued he, addressing Hayes. "We'll amuse you in your absence, and drink to the health of your pretty wife here."

This promise, to do the halberdier justice, he fulfilled. He called upon the landlady to produce the desired

Digitized by Google

liquor; and when Mr. Hayes flung himself at that lady's feet, demanding succour from her, and asking whether there was no law in the land——

"There's no law at the 'Three Rooks' except *this!*" said Mr. Brock in reply, holding up a horse-pistol. To which the hostess, grinning, assented, and silently went her way.

After some further solicitations, John Hayes drew out the necessary letter to his father, stating that he was pressed, and would not be set free under a sum of twenty guineas; and that it would be of no use to detain the bearer of the letter, inasmuch as the gentlemen who had possession of him vowed that they would murder him should any harm befall their comrade. As a further proof of the authenticity of the letter, a token was added: a ring that Hayes wore, and that his mother had given him.

The missives were, after some consultation, entrusted to the care of the tall halberdier, who seemed to rank as second in command of the forces that marched under Corporal Brock. This gentleman was called indifferently Ensign, Mr., or even Captain Macshane; his intimates occasionally in sport called him Nosey, from the prominence of that feature in his countenance; or Spindleshins, for the very reason which brought on the first Edward a similar nickname. Mr. Macshane then quitted Worcester, mounted on Hayes's horse; leaving all parties at the "Three Rooks" not a little anxious for his return.

This was not to be expected until the next morning; and a weary *nuit de noces* did Mr. Hayes pass. Dinner was served, and, according to promise, Mr. Brock and his two friends enjoyed the meal along with the bride and bridegroom. Punch followed, and this was taken in company; then came supper. Mr. Brock alone

Digitized by Google

partook of this, the other two gentlemen preferring the society of their pipes and the landlady in the kitchen.

"It is a sorry entertainment I confess," said the ex-corporal, "and a dismal way for a gentleman to spend his bridal night; but somebody must stay with you, my dears: for who knows but you might take a fancy to scream out of window, and then there would be murder, and the deuce and all to pay? One of us must stay, and my friends love a pipe, so you must put up with my company until he can relieve guard."

The reader will not, of course, expect that three people who were to pass the night, however unwillingly, together in an inn-room, should sit there dumb and moody, and without any personal communication; on the contrary, Mr. Brock, as an old soldier, entertained his prisoners with the utmost courtesy, and did all that lay in his power, by the help of liquor and conversation, to render their durance tolerable. On the bridegroom his attentions were a good deal thrown away: Mr. Hayes consented to drink copiously, but could not be made to talk much; and, in fact, the fright of the seizure, the fate hanging over him should his parents refuse a ransom, and the tremendous outlay of money which would take place should they accede to it, weighed altogether on his mind so much as utterly to unman it.

As for Mrs. Cat, I don't think she was at all sorry in her heart to see the old Corporal: for he had been a friend of old times — dear times to her; she had had from him, too, and felt for him not a little kindness; and there was really a very tender, innocent friendship subsisting between this pair of rascals, who relished much a night's conversation together.

The Corporal, after treating his prisoners to punch in great quantities, proposed the amusement of cards:

Digitized by Google

over which Mr. Hayes had not been occupied more than an hour, when he found himself so excessively sleepy as to be persuaded to fling himself down on the bed, dressed as he was, and there to snore away until morning.

Mrs. Catherine had no inclination for sleep; and the Corporal, equally wakeful, plied incessantly the bottle, and held with her a great deal of conversation. The sleep, which was equivalent to the absence of John Hayes, took all restraint from their talk. She explained to Brock the circumstances of her marriage, which we have already described; they wondered at the chance which had brought them together at the "Three Rooks;" nor did Brock at all hesitate to tell her at once that his calling was quite illegal, and that his intention was simply to extort money. The worthy Corporal had not the slightest shame regarding his own profession, and cut many jokes with Mrs. Cat about her late one; her attempt to murder the Count, and her future prospects as a wife.

And here, having brought him upon the scene again, we may as well shortly narrate some of the principal circumstances which befell him after his sudden departure from Birmingham; and which he narrated with much candour to Mrs. Catherine.

He rode the Captain's horse to Oxford (having exchanged his military dress for a civil costume on the road), and at Oxford he disposed of "George of Denmark," a great bargain, to one of the heads of colleges. As soon as Mr. Brock, who took on himself the style and title of Captain Wood, had sufficiently examined the curiosities of the University, he proceeded at once to the capital: the only place for a gentleman of his fortune and figure.

Here he read, with a great deal of philosophical

Digitized by Google

indifference, in the *Daily Post*, the *Courant*, the *Observator*, the *Gazette*, and the chief journals of those days, which he made a point of examining at "Button's" and "Will's," an accurate description of his person, his clothes, and the horse he rode, and a promise of fifty guineas' reward to any person who would give an account of him (so that he might be captured) to Captain Count Galgenstein at Birmingham, to Mr. Murfey at the "Golden Ball" in the Savoy, or Mr. Bates at the "Blew Anchor in Pickadilly." But Captain Wood, in an enormous full-bottomed periwig that cost him sixty pounds,[1] with high red heels to his shoes, a silver sword, and a gold snuff-box, and a large wound (obtained, he said, at the siege of Barcelona), which disfigured much of his countenance, and caused him to cover one eye, was in small danger, he thought, of being mistaken for Corporal Brock, the deserter of Cutts's; and strutted along the Mall with as grave an air as the very best nobleman who appeared there. He was generally, indeed, voted to be very good company; and as his expenses were unlimited ("A few convent candlesticks, my dear," he used to whisper, "melt into a vast number of doubloons"), he commanded as good society as he chose to ask for; and it was speedily known as a fact throughout town, that Captain Wood, who had served under his Majesty Charles III. of Spain, had carried off the diamond petticoat of our Lady of Compostella, and lived upon the proceeds of the fraud. People were good Protestants in those days, and many a one longed to have been his partner in the pious plunder.

All surmises concerning his wealth, Captain Wood, with much discretion, encouraged. He contradicted no report, but was quite ready to confirm all; and

[1] In the ingenious contemporary history of Moll Flanders, a periwig is mentioned as costing that sum.

Digitized by Google

when two different rumours were positively put to him, he used only to laugh, and say, "My dear sir, *I* don't make the stories; but I'm not called upon to deny them; and I give you fair warning, that I shall assent to every one of them; so you may believe them or not, as you please." And so he had the reputation of being a gentleman, not only wealthy, but discreet. In truth, it was almost a pity that worthy Brock had not been a gentleman born; in which case, doubtless, he would have lived and died as became his station; for he spent his money like a gentleman, he loved women like a gentleman, he would fight like a gentleman, he gambled and got drunk like a gentleman. What did he want else? Only a matter of six descents, a little money, and an estate, to render him the equal of St. John or Harley. "Ah, those were merry days!" would Mr. Brock say,—for he loved, in a good old age, to recount the story of his London fashionable campaign;—"and when I think how near I was to become a great man, and to die perhaps a general, I can't but marvel at the wicked obstinacy of my ill-luck."

"I will tell you what I did, my dear: I had lodgings in Piccadilly, as if I were a lord; I had two large periwigs, and three suits of laced clothes; I kept a little black dressed out like a Turk; I walked daily in the Mall; I dined at the politest ordinary in Covent Garden; I frequented the best of coffee-houses, and knew all the pretty fellows of the town; I cracked a bottle with Mr. Addison, and lent many a piece to Dick Steele (a sad debauched rogue, my dear); and, above all, I'll tell you what I did—the noblest stroke that sure ever a gentleman performed in my situation.

"One day, going into 'Will's,' I saw a crowd of gentlemen gathered together, and heard one of them say, 'Captain Wood! I don't know the man; but there

Digitized by Google

was a Captain Wood in Southwell's regiment.' Egad, it was my Lord Peterborough himself who was talking about me! So, putting off my hat, I made a most gracious *congé* to my lord, and said I knew *him*, and rode behind him at Barcelona on our entry into that town.

"'No doubt you did, Captain Wood,' says my lord, taking my hand; 'and no doubt you know me: for many more know Tom Fool, than Tom Fool knows.' And with this, at which all of us laughed, my lord called for a bottle, and he and I sat down and drank it together.

"Well, he was in disgrace, as you know, but he grew mighty fond of me, and — would you believe it? — nothing would satisfy him but presenting me at Court! Yes, to her sacred Majesty the Queen, and my Lady Marlborough, who was in high feather. Ay, truly, the sentinels on duty used to salute me as if I were Corporal John himself! I was in the high road to fortune. Charley Mordaunt used to call me Jack, and drink canary at my chambers; I used to make one at my Lord Treasurer's levee; I had even got Mr. Army Secretary Walpole to take a hundred guineas in a compliment; and he had promised me a majority: when bad luck turned, and all my fine hopes were overthrown in a twinkling.

"You see, my dear, that after we had left that gaby, Galgenstein, — ha, ha, — with a gag in his mouth, and twopence-halfpenny in his pocket, the honest Count was in the sorriest plight in the world; owing money here and there to tradesmen, a cool thousand to the Warwickshire Squire: and all this on eighty pounds a year! Well, for a little time the tradesmen held their hands; while the jolly Count moved heaven and earth to catch hold of his dear Corporal and his dear money-

Digitized by Google

bags over again, and placarded every town from London to Liverpool with descriptions of my pretty person. The bird was flown, however, — the money clean gone, — and when there was no hope of regaining it, what did the creditors do but clap my gay gentleman into Shrewsbury gaol: where I wish he had rotted, for my part.

"But no such luck for honest Peter Brock, or Captain Wood, as he was in those days. One blessed Monday I went to wait on Mr. Secretary, and he squeezed my hand and whispered to me that I was to be Major of a regiment in Virginia — the very thing: for you see, my dear, I did n't care about joining my Lord Duke in Flanders; being pretty well known to the army there. The Secretary squeezed my hand (it had a fifty-pound bill in it) and wished me joy, and called me Major, and bowed me out of his closet into the ante-room; and, as gay as may be, I went off to the 'Tilt-yard Coffee-house' in Whitehall, which is much frequented by gentlemen of our profession, where I bragged not a little of my good luck.

"Amongst the company were several of my acquaintances, and amongst them a gentleman I did not much care to see, look you! I saw a uniform that I knew — red and yellow facings — Cutts's, my dear; and the wearer of this was no other than his Excellency Gustavus Adolphus Maximilian, whom we all know of!

"He stared me full in the face, right into my eye (t'other one was patched, you know); and after standing stock-still with his mouth open, gave a step back, and then a step forward, and then screeched out, 'It's Brock!'

"'I beg your pardon, sir,' says I; 'did you speak to me?'

"'I'll *swear* it's Brock,' cries Gal, as soon as he

Digitized by Google

CAPTAIN BROCK Appears at Court with My Lord Peterborough

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

hears my voice, and laid hold of my cuff (a pretty bit of mechlin as ever you saw, by the way).

"'Sirrah!' says I, drawing it back, and giving my lord a little touch of the fist (just at the last button of the waistcoat, my dear,—a rare place if you wish to prevent a man from speaking too much: it sent him reeling to the other end of the room). 'Ruffian!' says I. 'Dog!' says I. 'Insolent puppy and coxcomb! what do you mean by laying your hand on me?'

"'Faith, Major, you giv him his *billyful*,' roared out a long Irish unattached ensign, that I had treated with many a glass of Nantz at the tavern. And so, indeed, I had; for the wretch could not speak for some minutes, and all the officers stood laughing at him, as he writhed and wriggled hideously.

"'Gentlemen, this is a monstrous scandal,' says one officer. 'Men of rank and honour at fists like a parcel of carters!'

"'Men of honour!' says the Count, who had fetched up his breath by this time. (I made for the door, but Macshane held me and said, 'Major, you are not going to shirk him, sure?' Whereupon I gripped his hand and vowed I would have the dog's life.)

"'Men of honour!' says the Count. 'I tell you the man is a deserter, a thief, and a swindler! He was my corporal, and ran away with a thou——'

"'Dog, you lie!' I roared out, and made another cut at him with my cane; but the gentlemen rushed between us.

"'O bluthanowns!' says honest Macshane, 'the lying scounthrel this fellow is! Gentlemen, I swear be me honour that Captain Wood was wounded at Barcelona; and that I saw him there; and that he and I ran away together at the battle of Almanza, and bad luck to us.'

Digitized by Google

"You see, my dear, that these Irish have the strongest imaginations in the world; and that I had actually persuaded poor Mac that he and I were friends in Spain. Everybody knew Mac, who was a character in his way, and believed him.

"'Strike a gentleman!' says I. 'I'll have your blood, I will.'

"'This instant,' says the Count, who was boiling with fury; 'and where you like.'

"'Montague House,' says I. 'Good,' says he. And off we went. In good time too, for the constables came in at the thought of such a disturbance, and wanted to take us in charge.

"But the gentlemen present, being military men, would not hear of this. Out came Mac's rapier, and that of half a dozen others; and the constables were then told to do their duty if they liked, or to take a crown-piece and leave us to ourselves. Off they went; and presently, in a couple of coaches, the Count and his friends, I and mine, drove off to the fields behind Montague House. Oh, that vile coffee-house! why did I enter it?

"We came to the ground. Honest Macshane was my second, and much disappointed because the second on the other side would not make a fight of it, and exchange a few passes with him; but he was an old major, a cool old hand, as brave as steel, and no fool. Well, the swords are measured, Galgenstein strips off his doublet, and I my handsome cut-velvet in like fashion. Galgenstein flings off his hat, and I handed mine over — the lace on it cost me twenty pounds. I longed to be at him, for — curse him! — I hate him, and know that he has no chance with me at sword's-play.

"'You 'll not fight in that periwig, sure?' says Macshane. 'Of course not,' says I, and took it off.

Digitized by Google

"May all barbers be roasted in flames; may all periwigs, bobwigs, scratchwigs, and Ramillies cocks, frizzle in purgatory from this day forth to the end of time! mine was the ruin of me: what might I not have been now but for that wig?

"I gave it over to Ensign Macshane, and with it went what I had quite forgotten, the large patch which I wore over one eye, which popped out fierce, staring, and lively as was any eye in the world.

"'Come on!' says I, and made a lunge at my Count; but he sprang back, (the dog was as active as a hare, and knew, from old times, that I was his master with the small sword,) and his second, wondering, struck up my blade.

"'I will not fight that man,' says he, looking mighty pale. 'I swear upon my honour that his name is Peter Brock: he was for two years my corporal, and deserted, running away with a thousand pounds of my moneys. Look at the fellow! what is the matter with his eye? why did he wear a patch over it? But stop!' says he. 'I have more proof. Hand me my pocket-book.' And from it, sure enough, he produced the infernal proclamation announcing my desertion! 'See if the fellow has a scar across his left ear' (and I can't say, my dear, but what I have: it was done by a cursed Dutchman at the Boyne). 'Tell me if he has not got C. R. in blue upon his right arm' (and there it is sure enough). 'Yonder swaggering Irishman may be his accomplice for what I know; but I will have no dealings with Mr. Brock, save with a constable for a second.'

"'This is an odd story, Captain Wood,' said the old Major, who acted for the Count.

"'A scounthrelly falsehood regarding me and my friend!' shouted out Mr. Macshane; 'and the Count shall answer for it.'

Digitized by Google

"'Stop, stop,' says the Major. 'Captain Wood is too gallant a gentleman, I am sure, not to satisfy the Count; and will show us that he has no such mark on his arm as only private soldiers put there.'

"'Captain Wood,' says I, 'will do no such thing, Major. I'll fight that scoundrel Galgenstein, or you, or any of you, like a man of honour; but I won't submit to be searched like a thief!'

"'No, in coorse,' said Macshane.

"'I must take my man off the ground,' says the Major.

"'Well, take him, sir,' says I, in a rage, 'and just let me have the pleasure of telling him that he's a coward and a liar; and that my lodgings are in Piccadilly, where, if ever he finds courage to meet me, he may hear of me!'

"'Faugh! I shpit on ye all,' cries my gallant ally Macshane. And sure enough he kept his word, or all but — suiting the action to it at any rate.

"And so we gathered up our clothes, and went back in our separate coaches, and no blood spilt.

"'And is it thrue now,' said Mr. Macshane, when we were alone — 'is it thrue now, all these divvles have been saying?'

"'Ensign,' says I, 'you're a man of the world?'

"''Deed and I am, and Insign these twenty-two years.'

"'Perhaps you'd like a few pieces?' says I.

"'Faith and I should; for, to tell you the secred thrut, I've not tasted mate these four days.'

"'Well then, Ensign, it *is* true,' says I; 'and as for meat, you shall have some at the first cook-shop.' I bade the coach stop until he bought a plateful, which he ate in the carriage, for my time was precious. I just told him the whole story: at which he laughed, and

Digitized by Google

swore that it was the best piece of *generalship* he ever heard on. When his belly was full, I took out a couple of guineas and gave them to him. Mr. Macshane began to cry at this, and kissed me, and swore he never would desert me: as, indeed, my dear, I don't think he will; for we have been the best of friends ever since, and he 's the only man I ever could trust, I think.

"I don't know what put it into my head, but I had a scent of some mischief in the wind; so stopped the coach a little before I got home, and, turning into a tavern, begged Macshane to go before me to my lodging, and see if the coast was clear: which he did; and came back to me as pale as death, saying that the house was full of constables. The cursed quarrel at the Tilt-yard had, I suppose, set the beaks upon me; and a pretty sweep they made of it. Ah, my dear! five hundred pounds in money, five suits of laced clothes, three periwigs, besides laced shirts, swords, canes, and snuff-boxes; and all to go back to that scoundrel Count.

"It was all over with me, I saw — no more being a gentleman for me; and if I remained to be caught, only a choice between Tyburn and a file of grenadiers. My love, under such circumstances, a gentleman can't be particular, and must be prompt: the livery-stable was hard by where I used to hire my coach to go to Court, — ha! ha! — and was known as a man of substance. Thither I went immediately. 'Mr. Warmmash,' says I, 'my gallant friend here and I have a mind for a ride and a supper at Twickenham, so you must lend us a pair of your best horses.' Which he did in a twinkling, and off we rode.

"We did not go into the Park, but turned off and cantered smartly up towards Kilburn; and, when we got into the country, galloped as if the devil were at our heels. Bless you, my love, it was all done in a minute:

Digitized by Google

and the Ensign and I found ourselves regular knights of the road, before we knew where we were almost. Only think of our finding you and your new husband at the 'Three Rooks!' There's not a greater fence than the landlady in all the country. It was she that put us on seizing your husband, and introduced us to the other two gentlemen, whose names I don't know any more than the dead."

. . . . . .

"And what became of the horses?" said Mrs. Catherine to Mr. Brock, when his tale was finished.

"Rips, madam," said he; "mere rips. We sold them at Stourbridge fair, and got but thirteen guineas for the two."

"And — and — the Count, Max; where is he, Brock?" sighed she.

"Whew!" whistled Mr. Brock. "What, hankering after him still? My dear, he is off to Flanders with his regiment; and I make no doubt, there have been twenty Countesses of Galgenstein since your time."

"I don't believe any such thing, sir," said Mrs. Catherine, starting up very angrily.

"If you did, I suppose you'd laudanum him; would n't you?"

"Leave the room, fellow," said the lady. But she recollected herself speedily again; and, clasping her hands, and looking very wretched at Brock, at the ceiling, at the floor, at her husband (from whom she violently turned away her head), she began to cry piteously: to which tears the Corporal set up a gentle accompaniment of whistling, as they trickled one after another down her nose.

I don't think they were tears of repentance; but of regret for the time when she had her first love, and her fine clothes, and her white hat and blue feather. Of

Digitized by Google

the two, the Corporal's whistle was much more innocent than the girl's sobbing: he was a rogue; but a good-natured old fellow, when his humour was not crossed. Surely our novel-writers make a great mistake in divesting their rascals of all gentle human qualities; they have such — and the only sad point to think of is, in all private concerns of life, abstract feelings, and dealings with friends, and so on, how dreadfully like a rascal is to an honest man. The man who murdered the Italian boy, set him first to play with his children whom he loved, and who doubtless deplored his loss.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER VI

THE ADVENTURES OF THE AMBASSADOR, MR. MACSHANE

IF we had not been obliged to follow history in all respects, it is probable that we should have left out the last adventure of Mrs. Catherine and her husband, at the inn at Worcester, altogether; for, in truth, very little came of it, and it is not very romantic or striking. But we are bound to stick closely, above all, by THE TRUTH — the truth, though it be not particularly pleasant to read of or to tell. As anybody may read in the "Newgate Calendar," Mr. and Mrs. Hayes were taken at an inn at Worcester; were confined there; were swindled by persons who pretended to impress the bridegroom for military service. What is one to do after that? Had we been writing novels instead of authentic histories, we might have carried them anywhere else we chose: and we had a great mind to make Hayes philosophising with Bolingbroke, like a certain Devereux; and Mrs. Catherine *maîtresse en titre* to Mr. Alexander Pope, Doctor Sacheverel, Sir John Reade the oculist, Dean Swift, or Marshal Tallard; as the very commonest romancer would under such circumstances. But alas and alas! truth must be spoken, whatever else is in the wind; and the excellent "Newgate Calendar," which contains the biographies and thanatographies of Hayes and his wife, does not say a word of their connections with any of the leading literary or military heroes of the time of her Majesty Queen

Digitized by Google

Anne. The "Calendar" says, in so many words, that Hayes was obliged to send to his father in Warwickshire for money to get him out of the scrape, and that the old gentleman came down to his aid. By this truth must we stick; and not for the sake of the most brilliant episode, — no, not for a bribe of twenty extra guineas per sheet, would we depart from it.

Mr. Brock's account of his adventure in London has given the reader some short notice of his friend, Mr. Macshane. Neither the wits nor the principles of that worthy Ensign were particularly firm: for drink, poverty, and a crack on the skull at the battle of Steenkirk had served to injure the former; and the Ensign was not in his best days possessed of any share of the latter. He had really, at one period, held such a rank in the army, but pawned his half-pay for drink and play; and for many years past had lived, one of the hundred thousand miracles of our city, upon nothing that anybody knew of, or of which he himself could give any account. Who has not a catalogue of these men in his list? who can tell whence comes the occasional clean shirt, who supplies the continual means of drunkenness, who wards off the daily-impending starvation? Their life is a wonder from day to day: their breakfast a wonder; their dinner a miracle; their bed an interposition of Providence. If you and I, my dear sir, want a shilling to-morrow, who will give it us? Will *our* butchers give us mutton-chops? will *our* laundresses clothe us in clean linen? — not a bone or a rag. Standing as we do (may it be ever so) somewhat removed from want,[1] is there one of us who does not shudder at the thought of descending into the lists to combat with it, and expect anything but to be utterly crushed in the encounter?

[1] The author, it must be remembered, has his lodgings and food provided for him by the government of his country.

Digitized by Google

Not a bit of it, my dear sir. It takes much more than you think for to starve a man. Starvation is very little when you are used to it. Some people I know even, who live on it quite comfortably, and make their daily bread by it. It had been our friend Macshane's sole profession for many years; and he did not fail to draw from it such a livelihood as was sufficient, and perhaps too good, for him. He managed to dine upon it a certain or rather uncertain number of days in the week, to sleep somewhere, and to get drunk at least three hundred times a year. He was known to one or two noblemen who occasionally helped him with a few pieces, and whom he helped in turn — never mind how. He had other acquaintances whom he pestered undauntedly; and from whom he occasionally extracted a dinner, or a crown, or mayhap, by mistake, a gold-headed cane, which found its way to the pawnbroker's. When flush of cash, he would appear at the coffee-house; when low in funds, the deuce knows into what mystic caves and dens he slunk for food and lodging. He was perfectly ready with his sword, and when sober, or better still, a very little tipsy, was a complete master of it; in the art of boasting and lying he had hardly any equals; in shoes he stood six feet five inches; and here is his complete *signalement.* It was a fact that he had been in Spain as a volunteer, where he had shown some gallantry, had had a brain-fever, and was sent home to starve as before.

Mr. Macshane had, however, like Mr. Conrad, the Corsair, one virtue in the midst of a thousand crimes, — he was faithful to his employer for the time being: and a story is told of him, which may or may not be to his credit, viz., that being hired on one occasion by a certain lord to inflict a punishment upon a *roturier* who had crossed his lordship in his amours, he, Macshane, did actually refuse from the person to be belaboured,

Digitized by Google

and who entreated his forbearance, a larger sum of money than the nobleman gave him for the beating; which he performed punctually, as bound in honour and friendship. This tale would the Ensign himself relate, with much self-satisfaction; and when, after the sudden flight from London, he and Brock took to their roving occupation, he cheerfully submitted to the latter as his commanding officer, called him always Major, and, bating blunders and drunkenness, was perfectly true to his leader. He had a notion — and, indeed, I don't know that it was a wrong one — that his profession was now, as before, strictly military, and according to the rules of honour. Robbing he called plundering the enemy; and hanging was, in his idea, a dastardly and cruel advantage that the latter took, and that called for the sternest reprisals.

The other gentlemen concerned were strangers to Mr. Brock, who felt little inclined to trust either of them upon such a message, or with such a large sum to bring back. They had, strange to say, a similar mistrust on their side; but Mr. Brock lugged out five guineas, which he placed in the landlady's hand as security for his comrade's return; and Ensign Macshane, being mounted on poor Hayes's own horse, set off to visit the parents of that unhappy young man. It was a gallant sight to behold our thieves' ambassador, in a faded sky-blue suit with orange facings, in a pair of huge jack-boots, unconscious of blacking, with a mighty basket-hilted sword by his side, and a little shabby beaver cocked over a large tow-periwig, ride out from the inn of the "Three Rooks" on his mission to Hayes's paternal village.

It was eighteen miles distant from Worcester; but Mr. Macshane performed the distance in safety, and in sobriety moreover (for such had been his instructions), and had no difficulty in discovering the house of old

Digitized by Google

Hayes: towards which, indeed, John's horse trotted incontinently. Mrs. Hayes, who was knitting at the house door, was not a little surprised at the appearance of the well-known grey gelding, and of the stranger mounted upon it.

Flinging himself off the steed with much agility, Mr. Macshane, as soon as his feet reached the ground, brought them rapidly together, in order to make a profound and elegant bow to Mrs. Hayes; and slapping his greasy beaver against his heart, and poking his periwig almost into the nose of the old lady, demanded whether he had the "shooprame honour of adthressing Misthriss Hees?"

Having been answered in the affirmative, he then proceeded to ask whether there was a blackguard boy in the house who would take "the horse to the steeble;" whether "he could have a dthrink of small-beer or buthermilk, being, faith, uncommon dthry;" and whether, finally, "he could be feevored with a few minutes' private conversation with her and Mr. Hees, on a matther of consitherable impartance?" All these preliminaries were to be complied with before Mr. Macshane would enter at all into the subject of his visit. The horse and man were cared for; Mr. Hayes was called in; and not a little anxious did Mrs. Hayes grow, in the meanwhile, with regard to the fate of her darling son. "Where is he? How is he? Is he dead?" said the old lady. "O yes, I'm sure he's dead!"

"Indeed, madam, and you're misteeken intirely: the young man is perfectly well in health."

"Oh, praised be heaven!"

"But mighty cast down in sperrits. To misfortunes, madam, look you, the best of us are subject; and a trifling one has fell upon your son."

And herewith Mr. Macshane produced a letter in the

Digitized by Google

handwriting of young Hayes, of which we have had the good luck to procure a copy. It ran thus: —

"HONORED FATHER AND MOTHER, — The bearer of this is a kind gentleman, who has left me in a great deal of trouble. Yesterday, at this towne, I fell in with some gentlemen of the queene's servas; after drinking with whom, I accepted her Majesty's mony to enliste. Repenting thereof, I did endeavour to escape; and, in so doing, had the misfortune to strike my superior officer, whereby I made myself liable to Death, according to the rules of warr. If, however, I pay twenty ginnys, all will be wel. You must give the same to the barer, els I shall be shott without fail on Tewsday morning. And so no more from your loving son,

"*From my prison at Bristol, this unhappy Monday.*" "JOHN HAYES.

When Mrs. Hayes read this pathetic missive, its success with her was complete, and she was for going immediately to the cupboard, and producing the money necessary for her darling son's release. But the carpenter Hayes was much more suspicious. "I don't know you, sir," said he to the ambassador.

"Do you doubt my honour, sir?" said the Ensign, very fiercely.

"Why, sir," replied Mr. Hayes, "I know little about it one way or other, but shall take it for granted, if you will explain a little more of this business."

"I sildom condescind to explean," said Mr. Macshane, "for it's not the custom in my rank; but I'll explean anything in reason."

"Pray, will you tell me in what regiment my son is enlisted?"

"In coorse. In Colonel Wood's fut, my dear; and a gallant corps it is as any in the army."

"And you left him?"

Digitized by Google

"On me soul, only three hours ago, having rid like a horse-jockey ever since; as in the sacred cause of humanity, curse me, every man should."

As Hayes's house was seventy miles from Bristol, the old gentleman thought this was marvellous quick riding, and so cut the conversation short. "You have said quite enough, sir," said he, "to show me there is some roguery in the matter, and that the whole story is false from beginning to end."

At this abrupt charge the Ensign looked somewhat puzzled, and then spoke with much gravity. "Roguery," said he, "Misthur Hees, is a sthrong term; and which, in consideration of my friendship for your family, I shall pass over. You doubt your son's honour, as there wrote by him in black and white?"

"You have forced him to write," said Mr. Hayes.

"The sly old divvle's right," muttered Mr. Macshane, aside. "Well, sir, to make a clean breast of it, he *has* been forced to write it. The story about the enlistment is a pretty fib, if you will, from beginning to end. And what then, my dear? Do you think your son's any better off for that?"

"Oh, where is he?" screamed Mrs. Hayes, plumping down on her knees. "We *will* give him the money, won't we, John?"

"I know you will, madam, when I tell you where he is. He is in the hands of some gentlemen of my acquaintance, who are at war with the present government, and no more care about cutting a man's throat than they do a chicken's. He is a prisoner, madam, of our sword and spear. If you choose to ransom him, well and good; if not, peace be with him! for never more shall you see him."

"And how do I know you won't come back to-morrow for more money?" asked Mr. Hayes.

Digitized by Google

"Sir, you have my honour; and I'd as lieve break my neck as my word," said Mr. Macshane, gravely. "Twenty guineas is the bargain. Take ten minutes to talk of it — take it then, or leave it; it's all the same to me, my dear." And it must be said of our friend the Ensign, that he meant every word he said, and that he considered the embassy on which he had come as perfectly honourable and regular.

"And pray, what prevents us," said Mr. Hayes, starting up in a rage, "from taking hold of you, as a surety for him?"

"You would n't fire on a flag of truce, would ye, you dishonourable ould civilian?" replied Mr. Macshane. "Besides," says he, "there's more reasons to prevent you: the first is this," pointing to his sword; "here are two more" — and these were pistols; "and the last and the best of all is, that you might hang me and dthraw me and quarther me, and yet never see so much as the tip of your son's nose again. Look you, sir, we run mighty risks in our profession — it's not all play, I can tell you. We're obliged to be punctual, too, or it's all up with the thrade. If I promise that your son will die as sure as fate to-morrow morning, unless I return home safe, our people *must* keep my promise; or else what chance is there for me? You would be down upon me in a moment with a posse of constables, and have me swinging before Warwick gaol. Pooh, my dear! you never would sacrifice a darling boy like John Hayes, let alone his lady, for the sake of my long carcass. One or two of our gentlemen have been taken that way already, because parents and guardians would not believe them."

"*And what became of the poor children?*" said Mrs. Hayes, who began to perceive the gist of the argument, and to grow dreadfully frightened.

Digitized by Google

"Don't let's talk of them, ma'm: humanity shudthers at the thought!" And herewith Mr. Macshane drew his finger across his throat, in such a dreadful way as to make the two parents tremble. "It's the way of war, madam, look you. The service I have the honour to belong to is not paid by the Queen; and so we're obliged to make our prisoners pay, according to established military practice."

No lawyer could have argued his case better than Mr. Macshane so far; and he completely succeeded in convincing Mr. and Mrs. Hayes of the necessity of ransoming their son. Promising that the young man should be restored to them next morning, along with his beautiful lady, he courteously took leave of the old couple, and made the best of his way back to Worcester again. The elder Hayes wondered who the lady could be of whom the ambassador had spoken, for their son's elopement was altogether unknown to them; but anger or doubt about this subject was overwhelmed by their fears for their darling John's safety. Away rode the gallant Macshane with the money necessary to effect this; and it must be mentioned, as highly to his credit, that he never once thought of appropriating the sum to himself, or of deserting his comrades in any way.

His ride from Worcester had been a long one. He had left that city at noon, but before his return thither the sun had gone down; and the landscape, which had been dressed like a prodigal, in purple and gold, now appeared like a Quaker, in dusky grey; and the trees by the road-side grew black as undertakers or physicians, and, bending their solemn heads to each other, whispered ominously among themselves; and the mists hung on the common; and the cottage lights went out one by one; and the earth and heaven grew black, but for some twinkling useless stars, which freckled the

Digitized by Google

ebon countenance of the latter; and the air grew colder; and about two o'clock the moon appeared, a dismal, pale-faced rake, walking solitary through the deserted sky; and about four, mayhap, the Dawn (wretched 'prentice-boy!) opened in the east the shutters of the Day: — in other words, more than a dozen hours had passed. Corporal Brock had been relieved by Mr. Redcap, the latter by Mr. Sicklop, the one-eyed gentleman; Mrs. John Hayes, in spite of her sorrows and bashfulness, had followed the example of her husband, and fallen asleep by his side — slept for many hours — and awakened still under the guardianship of Mr. Brock's troop; and all parties began anxiously to expect the return of the ambassador, Mr. Macshane.

That officer, who had performed the first part of his journey with such distinguished prudence and success, found the night, on his journey homewards, was growing mighty cold and dark; and as he was thirsty and hungry, had money in his purse, and saw no cause to hurry, he determined to take refuge at an alehouse for the night, and to make for Worcester by dawn the next morning. He accordingly alighted at the first inn on his road, consigned his horse to the stable, and entering the kitchen, called for the best liquor in the house.

A small company was assembled at the inn, among whom Mr. Macshane took his place with a great deal of dignity; and having a considerable sum of money in his pocket, felt a mighty contempt for his society, and soon let them know the contempt he felt for them. After a third flagon of ale, he discovered that the liquor was sour, and emptied, with much spluttering and grimaces, the remainder of the beer into the fire. This process so offended the parson of the parish (who in those good old times did not disdain to take the post of honour in the chimney-nook), that he left his corner,

Digitized by Google

looking wrathfully at the offender; who without any more ado instantly occupied it. It was a fine thing to hear the jingling of the twenty pieces in his pocket, the oaths which he distributed between the landlord, the guests, and the liquor — to remark the sprawl of his mighty jack-boots, before the sweep of which the timid guests edged further and further away; and the languishing leers which he cast on the landlady, as with wide-spread arms he attempted to seize upon her.

When the ostler had done his duties in the stable, he entered the inn, and whispered the landlord that "the stranger was riding John Hayes's horse:" of which fact the host soon convinced himself, and did not fail to have some suspicions of his guest. Had he not thought that times were unquiet, horses might be sold, and one man's money was as good as another's, he probably would have arrested the Ensign immediately, and so lost all the profit of the score which the latter was causing every moment to be enlarged.

In a couple of hours, with that happy facility which one may have often remarked in men of the gallant Ensign's nation, he had managed to disgust every one of the landlord's other guests, and scare them from the kitchen. Frightened by his addresses, the landlady too had taken flight; and the host was the only person left in the apartment; who there stayed for interest's sake merely, and listened moodily to his tipsy guest's conversation. In an hour more, the whole house was awakened by a violent noise of howling, curses, and pots clattering to and fro. Forth issued Mrs. Landlady in her night-gear, out came John Ostler with his pitchfork, downstairs tumbled Mrs. Cook and one or two guests, and found the landlord and ensign on the kitchen-floor — the wig of the latter lying, much singed and emitting strange odours, in the fireplace, his face hideously dis-

Digitized by Google

torted, and a great quantity of his natural hair in the partial occupation of the landlord; who had drawn it and the head down towards him, in order that he might have the benefit of pummelling the latter more at ease. In revenge, the landlord was undermost, and the Ensign's arms were working up and down his face and body like the flaps of a paddle-wheel: the man of war had clearly the best of it.

The combatants were separated as soon as possible; but as soon as the excitement of the fight was over, Ensign Macshane was found to have no further powers of speech, sense, or locomotion, and was carried by his late antagonist to bed. His sword and pistols, which had been placed at his side at the commencement of the evening, were carefully put by, and his pocket visited. Twenty guineas in gold, a large knife — used, probably, for the cutting of bread-and-cheese — some crumbs of those delicacies and a paper of tobacco found in the breeches-pockets, and in the bosom of the sky-blue coat the leg of a cold fowl and half of a raw onion, constituted his whole property.

These articles were not very suspicious; but the beating which the landlord had received tended greatly to confirm his own and his wife's doubts about their guest; and it was determined to send off in the early morning to Mr. Hayes, informing him how a person had lain at their inn who had ridden thither mounted upon young Hayes's horse. Off set John Ostler at earliest dawn; but on his way he woke up Mr. Justice's clerk, and communicated his suspicions to him; and Mr. Clerk consulted with the village baker, who was up always early; and the clerk, the baker, the butcher with his cleaver, and two gentlemen who were going to work, all adjourned to the inn.

Accordingly, when Ensign Macshane was in a truckle-

Digitized by Google

bed, plunged in that deep slumber which only innocence and drunkenness enjoy in this world, and charming the ears of morn by the regular and melodious music of his nose, a vile plot was laid against him; and when about seven of the clock he woke, he found, on sitting up in his bed, three gentlemen on each side of it, armed, and looking ominous. One held a constable's staff, and, albeit unprovided with a warrant, would take upon himself the responsibility of seizing Mr. Macshane, and of carrying him before his worship at the hall.

"Taranouns, man!" said the Ensign, springing up in bed, and abruptly breaking off a loud, sonorous yawn, with which he had opened the business of the day, "you won't deteen a gentleman who's on life and death? I give ye my word, an affair of honour."

"How came you by that there horse?" said the baker.

"How came you by these here fifteen guineas?" said the landlord, in whose hands, by some process, five of the gold pieces had disappeared.

"What is this here idolatrous string of beads?" said the clerk.

Mr. Macshane, the fact is, was a Catholic, but did not care to own it: for in those days his religion was not popular. "Baids? Holy Mother of saints! give me back them baids," said Mr. Macshane, clasping his hands. "They were blest, I tell you, by his holiness the po—— psha! I mane they belong to a darling little daughter I had that's in heaven now: and as for the money and the horse, I should like to know how a gentleman is to travel in this counthry without them?"

"Why, you see, he may travel in the country to *git* 'em," here shrewdly remarked the constable; "and it's our belief that neither horse nor money is honestly come by. If his worship is satisfied, why so, in course,

Digitized by Google

shall we be; but there is highwaymen abroad, look you; and, to our notion, you have very much the cut of one."

Further remonstrances or threats on the part of Mr. Macshane were useless. Although he vowed that he was first-cousin to the Duke of Leinster, an officer in her Majesty's service, and the dearest friend Lord Marlborough had, his impudent captors would not believe a word of his statement (which, further, was garnished with a tremendous number of oaths); and he was, about eight o'clock, carried up to the house of Squire Ballance, the neighbouring justice of the peace.

When the worthy magistrate asked the crime of which the prisoners had been guilty, the captors looked somewhat puzzled for the moment; since, in truth, it could not be shown that the Ensign had committed any crime at all; and if he had confined himself to simple silence, and thrown upon them the onus of proving his misdemeanors, Justice Ballance must have let him loose, and soundly rated his clerk and the landlord for detaining an honest gentleman on so frivolous a charge.

But this caution was in the Ensign's disposition; and though his accusers produced no satisfactory charge against him, his own words were quite enough to show how suspicious his character was. When asked his name, he gave it in as Captain Geraldine, on his way to Ireland, by Bristol, on a visit to his cousin the Duke of Leinster. He swore solemnly that his friends, the Duke of Marlborough and Lord Peterborough, under both of whom he had served, should hear of the manner in which he had been treated; and when the justice, — a sly old gentleman, and one that read the *Gazettes*, — asked him at what battles he had been present, the gallant Ensign pitched on a couple in Spain and in Flanders, which had been fought within a week of each

Digitized by Google

other, and vowed that he had been desperately wounded at both; so that, at the end of his examination, which had been taken down by the clerk, he had been made to acknowledge as follows: — Captain Geraldine, six feet four inches in height; thin, with a very long red nose, and red hair; grey eyes, and speaks with a strong Irish accent; is the first-cousin of the Duke of Leinster, and in constant communication with him: does not know whether his Grace has any children; does not know whereabouts he lives in London; cannot say what sort of a looking man his Grace is: is acquainted with the Duke of Marlborough, and served in the dragoons at the battle of Ramillies; at which time he was with my Lord Peterborough before Barcelona. Borrowed the horse which he rides from a friend in London, three weeks since. Peter Hobbs, ostler, swears that it was in his master's stable four days ago, and is the property of John Hayes, carpenter. Cannot account for the fifteen guineas found on him by the landlord; says they were twenty; says he won them at cards, a fortnight since, at Edinburgh; says he is riding about the country for his amusement: afterwards says he is on a matter of life and death, and going to Bristol; declared last night, in the hearing of several witnesses, that he was going to York; says he is a man of independent property, and has large estates in Ireland, and a hundred thousand pounds in the Bank of England. Has no shirt or stockings, and the coat he wears is marked "S.S." In his boots is written "Thomas Rodgers," and in his hat is the name of the "Rev. Doctor Snoffler."

Dr. Snoffler lived at Worcester, and had lately advertised in the *Hue and Cry* a number of articles taken from his house. Mr. Macshane said, in reply to this, that his hat had been changed at the inn, and he was

Digitized by Google

ready to take his oath that he came thither in a gold-laced one. But this fact was disproved by the oaths of many persons who had seen him at the inn. And he was about to be imprisoned for thefts which he had not committed (the fact about the hat being, that he had purchased it from a gentleman at the "Three Rooks" for two pints of beer)—he was about to be remanded, when, behold, Mrs. Hayes the elder made her appearance; and to her it was that the Ensign was indebted for his freedom.

Old Hayes had gone to work before the ostler arrived; but when his wife heard the lad's message, she instantly caused her pillion to be placed behind the saddle, and mounting the grey horse, urged the stable-boy to gallop as hard as ever he could to the justice's house.

She entered panting and alarmed. "Oh, what is your honour going to do to this honest gentleman?" said she. "In the name of heaven, let him go! His time is precious—he has important business — business of life and death."

"I tould the jidge so," said the Ensign, "but he refused to take my word — the sacred wurrd of honour of Captain Geraldine."

Macshane was good at a single lie, though easily flustered on an examination; and this was a very creditable stratagem to acquaint Mrs. Hayes with the name that he bore.

"What! you know Captain Geraldine?" said Mr. Ballance, who was perfectly well acquainted with the carpenter's wife.

"In coorse she does. Has n't she known me these tin years? Are we not related? Did n't she give me the very horse which I rode, and, to make belave, tould you I 'd bought in London?"

Digitized by Google

"Let her tell her own story. Are you related to Captain Geraldine, Mrs. Hayes?"

"Yes — oh, yes!"

"A very elegant connection! And you gave him the horse, did you, of your own free-will?"

"Oh, yes! of my own will — I would give him anything. Do, do, your honour, let him go! His child is dying," said the old lady, bursting into tears. "It may be dead before he gets to — before he gets there. Oh, your honour, your honour, pray, pray don't detain him!"

The justice did not seem to understand this excessive sympathy on the part of Mrs. Hayes; nor did the father himself appear to be nearly so affected by his child's probable fate as the honest woman who interested herself for him. On the contrary, when she made this passionate speech, Captain Geraldine only grinned and said, "Niver mind, my dear. If his honour will keep an honest gentleman for doing nothing, why let him — the law must settle between us; and as for the child, poor thing, the Lord deliver it!"

At this, Mrs. Hayes fell to entreating more loudly than ever; and as there was really no charge against him, Mr. Ballance was constrained to let him go.

The landlord and his friends were making off, rather confused, when Ensign Macshane called upon the former in a thundering voice to stop, and refund the five guineas which he had stolen from him. Again the host swore there were but fifteen in his pocket. But when, on the Bible, the Ensign solemnly vowed that he had twenty, and called upon Mrs. Hayes to say whether yesterday, half-an-hour before he entered the inn, she had not seen him with twenty guineas, and that lady expressed herself ready to swear that she had, Mr. Landlord looked more crestfallen than ever, and said that he had not counted the money when he took it; and though he did

Digitized by Google

in his soul believe that there were only fifteen guineas, rather than be suspected of a shabby action, he would pay the five guineas out of his own pocket: which he did, and with the Ensign's, or rather Mrs. Hayes's own coin.

As soon as they were out of the justice's house, Mr. Macshane, in the fulness of his gratitude, could not help bestowing an embrace upon Mrs. Hayes. And when she implored him to let her ride behind him to her darling son, he yielded with a very good grace, and off the pair set on John Hayes's grey.

. . . . . .

"Who has Nosey brought with him now?" said Mr. Sicklop, Brock's one-eyed confederate, who, about three hours after the above adventure, was lolling in the yard of the "Three Rooks." It was our Ensign, with the mother of his captive. They had not met with any accident in their ride.

"I shall now have the shooprame bliss," said Mr. Macshane, with much feeling, as he lifted Mrs. Hayes from the saddle — "the shooprame bliss of intwining two harrts that are mead for one another. Ours, my dear, is a dismal profession; but ah! don't moments like this make aminds for years of pain? This way, my dear. Turn to your right, then to your left — mind the stip — and the third door round the corner."

All these precautions were attended to; and after giving his concerted knock, Mr. Macshane was admitted into an apartment, which he entered holding his gold pieces in the one hand, and a lady by the other.

We shall not describe the meeting which took place between mother and son. The old lady wept copiously; the young man was really glad to see his relative, for he deemed that his troubles were over. Mrs. Cat bit her lips, and stood aside, looking somewhat foolish; Mr. Brock counted the money; and Mr. Macshane took a

Digitized by Google

large dose of strong waters, as a pleasing solace for his labours, dangers, and fatigue.

When the maternal feelings were somewhat calmed, the old lady had leisure to look about her, and really felt a kind of friendship and goodwill for the company of thieves in which she found herself. It seemed to her that they had conferred an actual favour on her, in robbing her of twenty guineas, threatening her son's life, and finally letting him go.

"Who is that droll old gentleman?" said she; and being told that it was Captain Wood, she dropped him a curtsey, and said, with much respect, "Captain, your very humble servant;" which compliment Mr. Brock acknowledged by a gracious smile and bow. "And who is this pretty young lady?" continued Mrs. Hayes.

"Why — hum — oh — mother, you must give her your blessing. She is Mrs. John Hayes." And herewith Mr. Hayes brought forward his interesting lady, to introduce her to his mamma.

The news did not at all please the old lady; who received Mrs. Catherine's embrace with a very sour face indeed. However, the mischief was done; and she was too glad to get back her son to be, on such an occasion, very angry with him. So, after a proper rebuke, she told Mrs. John Hayes that though she never approved of her son's attachment, and thought he married below his condition, yet as the evil was done, it was their duty to make the best of it; and she, for her part, would receive her into her house, and make her as comfortable there as she could.

"I wonder whether she has any more money in that house?" whispered Mr. Sicklop to Mr. Redcap; who, with the landlady, had come to the door of the room, and had been amusing themselves by the contemplation of this sentimental scene.

Digitized by Google

"What a fool that wild Hirishman was not to bleed her for more," said the landlady; "but he's a poor ignorant Papist. I'm sure my man" (this gentleman had been hanged) "would n't have come away with such a beggarly sum."

"Suppose we have some more out of 'em?" said Mr. Redcap. "What prevents us? We have got the old mare, and the colt too, — ha! ha! and the pair of 'em ought to be worth at least a hundred to us."

This conversation was carried on *sottovoce;* and I don't know whether Mr. Brock had any notion of the plot which was arranged by the three worthies. The landlady began it. "Which punch, madam, will you take?" says she. "You must have something for the good of the house, now you are in it."

"In coorse," said the Ensign.

"Certainly," said the other three. But the old lady said she was anxious to leave the place; and putting down a crown-piece, requested the hostess to treat the gentlemen in her absence. "Good-by, Captain," said the old lady.

"Ajew!" cried the Ensign, "and long life to you, my dear. You got me out of a scrape at the justice's yonder; and, split me! but Insign Macshane will remimber it as long as he lives."

And now Hayes and the two ladies made for the door; but the landlady placed herself against it, and Mr. Sicklop said, "No, no, my pretty madams, you ain't a-going off so cheap as that neither; you are not going out for a beggarly twenty guineas, look you, — we must have more."

Mr. Hayes starting back, and cursing his fate, fairly burst into tears; the two women screamed; and Mr. Brock looked as if the proposition both amused and had been expected by him: but not so Ensign Macshane.

Digitized by Google

"Major!" said he, clawing fiercely hold of Brock's arms.

"Ensign," said Mr. Brock, smiling.

"Arr we, or arr we not, men of honour?"

"Oh, in coorse," said Brock, laughing, and using Macshane's favourite expression.

"If we *arr* men of honour, we are bound to stick to our word; and hark ye, ye dirty one-eyed scoundrel, if you don't immadiately make way for these leedies, and this lily-livered young jontleman who's crying so, the Meejor here and I will lug out and force you." And so saying, he drew his great sword and made a pass at Mr. Sicklop; which that gentleman avoided, and which caused him and his companion to retreat from the door. The landlady still kept her position at it, and with a storm of oaths against the Ensign, and against two Englishmen who ran away from a wild Hirishman, swore she would not budge a foot, and would stand there until her dying day.

"Faith, then, needs must," said the Ensign, and made a lunge at the hostess, which passed so near the wretch's throat, that she screamed, sank on her knees, and at last opened the door.

Down the stairs, then, with great state, Mr. Macshane led the elder lady, the married couple following; and having seen them to the street, took an affectionate farewell of the party, whom he vowed that he would come and see. "You can walk the eighteen miles aisy, between this and nightfall," said he.

"*Walk!*" exclaimed Mr. Hayes. "Why, have n't we got Ball, and shall ride and tie all the way?"

"Madam!" cried Macshane, in a stern voice, "honour before everything. Did you not, in the presence of his worship, vow and declare that you gave me that horse, and now d' ye talk of taking it back again? Let

Digitized by Google

me tell you, madam, that such paltry thricks ill become a person of your years and respectability, and ought never to be played with Insign Timothy Macshane."

He waved his hat and strutted down the street; and Mrs. Catherine Hayes, along with her bridegroom and mother-in-law, made the best of their way homeward on foot.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER VII

WHICH EMBRACES A PERIOD OF SEVEN YEARS

THE recovery of so considerable a portion of his property from the clutches of Brock was, as may be imagined, no trifling source of joy to that excellent young man, Count Gustavus Adolphus de Galgenstein; and he was often known to say, with much archness, and a proper feeling of gratitude to the Fate which had ordained things so, that the robbery was, in reality, one of the best things that could have happened to him: for, in event of Mr. Brock's *not* stealing the money, his Excellency the Count would have had to pay the whole to the Warwickshire Squire, who had won it from him at play. He was enabled, in the present instance, to plead his notorious poverty as an excuse; and the Warwickshire conqueror got off with nothing, except a very badly written autograph of the Count's, simply acknowledging the debt.

This point his Excellency conceded with the greatest candour; but (as, doubtless, the reader may have remarked in the course of his experience,) to owe is not quite the same thing as to pay; and from the day of his winning the money until the day of his death the Warwickshire Squire did never, by any chance, touch a single bob, tizzy, tester, moidore, maravedi, doubloon, tomaun, or rupee, of the sum which Monsieur de Galgenstein had lost to him.

That young nobleman was, as Mr. Brock hinted in

Digitized by Google

the little autobiographical sketch which we gave in a former chapter, incarcerated for a certain period, and for certain other debts, in the donjons of Shrewsbury; but he released himself from them by that noble and consolatory method of whitewashing which the law has provided for gentlemen in his oppressed condition; and he had not been a week in London, when he fell in with, and overcame, or put to flight, Captain Wood, *alias* Brock, and immediately seized upon the remainder of his property. After receiving this, the Count, with commendable discretion, disappeared from England altogether for a while; nor are we at all authorised to state that any of his debts to his tradesmen were discharged, any more than his debts of honour, as they are pleasantly called.

Having thus settled with his creditors, the gallant Count had interest enough with some of the great folk to procure for himself a post abroad, and was absent in Holland for some time. It was here that he became acquainted with the lovely Madam Silverkoop, the widow of a deceased gentleman of Leyden; and although the lady was not at that age at which tender passions are usually inspired — being sixty — and though she could not, like Mademoiselle Ninon de l'Enclos, then at Paris, boast of charms which defied the progress of time, — for Mrs. Silverkoop was as red as a boiled lobster, and as unwieldy as a porpoise; and although her mental attractions did by no means make up for her personal deficiencies, — for she was jealous, violent, vulgar, drunken, and stingy to a miracle: yet her charms had an immediate effect on Monsieur de Galgenstein; and hence, perhaps, the reader (the rogue! how well he knows the world!) will be led to conclude that the honest widow was *rich*.

Such, indeed, she was; and Count Gustavus, de-

Digitized by Google

spising the difference between his twenty quarterings and her twenty thousand pounds, laid the most desperate siege to her, and finished by causing her to capitulate; as I do believe, after a reasonable degree of pressing, any woman will do to any man; such, at least, has been *my* experience in the matter.

The Count then married; and it was curious to see how he — who, as we have seen in the case of Mrs. Cat, had been as great a tiger and domestic bully as any extant — now, by degrees, fell into a quiet submission towards his enormous Countess; who ordered him up and down as a lady orders her footman, who permitted him speedily not to have a will of his own, and who did not allow him a shilling of her money, without receiving for the same an accurate account.

How was it that he, the abject slave of Madam Silverkoop, had been victorious over Mrs. Cat? The first blow is, I believe, the decisive one in these cases, and the Countess had stricken it a week after their marriage; — establishing a supremacy which the Count never afterwards attempted to question.

We have alluded to his Excellency's marriage, as in duty bound, because it will be necessary to account for his appearance hereafter in a more splendid fashion than that under which he has hitherto been known to us; and just comforting the reader by the knowledge that the union, though prosperous in a worldly point of view, was, in reality, extremely unhappy, we must say no more from this time forth of the fat and legitimate Madame de Galgenstein. Our darling is Mrs. Catherine, who had formerly acted in her stead; and only in so much as the fat Countess did influence in any way the destinies of our heroine, or those wise and virtuous persons who have appeared and are to follow her to her end, shall we in any degree allow her name to

Digitized by Google

figure here. It is an awful thing to get a glimpse, as one sometimes does, when the time is past, of some little, little wheel which works the whole mighty machinery of FATE, and see how our destinies turn on a minute's delay or advance, or on the turning of a street, or on somebody else's turning of a street, or on somebody else's doing of something else in Downing Street or in Timbuctoo, now or a thousand years ago. Thus, for instance, if Miss Poots, in the year 1695, had never been the lovely inmate of a Spielhaus at Amsterdam, Mr. Van Silverkoop would never have seen her; if the day had not been extraordinarily hot, the worthy merchant would never have gone thither; if he had not been fond of Rhenish wine and sugar, he never would have called for any such delicacies; if he had not called for them, Miss Ottilia Poots would never have brought them, and partaken of them; if he had not been rich, she would certainly have rejected all the advances made to her by Silverkoop; if he had not been so fond of Rhenish and sugar, he never would have died; and Mrs. Silverkoop would have been neither rich nor a widow, nor a wife to Count Von Galgenstein. Nay, nor would this history have ever been written; for if Count Galgenstein had not married the rich widow, Mrs. Catherine would never have ———

Oh, my dear Madam! you thought we were going to tell you. Pooh! nonsense, — no such thing! not for two or three and seventy pages or so — when perhaps, you *may* know what Mrs. Catherine never would have done.

The reader will remember, in the second chapter of these Memoirs, the announcement that Mrs. Catherine had given to the world a child, who might bear, if he chose, the arms of Galgenstein, with the further adornment of a bar-sinister. This child had been put out to nurse some time before its mother's elopement from the Count; and

Digitized by Google

as that nobleman was in funds at the time (having had that success at play which we duly chronicled), he paid a sum of no less than twenty guineas, which was to be the yearly reward of the nurse into whose charge the boy was put. The woman grew fond of the brat; and when, after the first year, she had no further news or remittances from the father or mother, she determined, for a while at least, to maintain the infant at her own expense: for, when rebuked by her neighbours on this score, she stoutly swore that no parents could ever desert their children, and that some day or other she should not fail to be rewarded for her trouble with this one.

Under this strange mental hallucination poor Goody Billings, who had five children and a husband of her own, continued to give food and shelter to little Tom for a period of no less than seven years; and though it must be acknowledged that the young gentleman did not in the slightest degree merit the kindnesses shown to him, Goody Billings, who was of a very soft and pitiful disposition, continued to bestow them upon him: because, she said, he was lonely and unprotected, and deserved them more than other children who had fathers and mothers to look after them. If, then, any difference was made between Tom's treatment and that of her own brood, it was considerably in favour of the former; to whom the largest proportions of treacle were allotted for his bread, and the handsomest supplies of hasty pudding. Besides, to do Mrs. Billings justice, there *was* a party against him; and that consisted not only of her husband and her five children, but of every single person in the neighbourhood who had an opportunity of seeing and becoming acquainted with Master Tom.

A celebrated philosopher — I think Miss Edgeworth — has broached the consolatory doctrine, that in intellect and disposition all human beings are entirely equal, and

Digitized by Google

that circumstance and education are the causes of the distinctions and divisions which afterwards unhappily take place among them. Not to argue this question, which places Jack Howard and Jack Thurtell on an exact level, — which would have us to believe that Lord Melbourne is by natural gifts and excellences a man as honest, brave, and far-sighted as the Duke of Wellington, — which would make out that Lord Lyndhurst is, in point of principle, eloquence, and political honesty, no better than Mr. O'Connell, — not, I say, arguing this doctrine, let us simply state that Master Thomas Billings (for, having no other, he took the name of the worthy people who adopted him,) was in his long-coats fearfully passionate, screaming and roaring perpetually, and showing all the ill that he *could* show. At the age of two, when his strength enabled him to toddle abroad, his favourite resort was the coal-hole or the dungheap: his roarings had not diminished in the least, and he had added to his former virtues two new ones, — a love of fighting and stealing; both which amiable qualities he had many opportunities of exercising every day. He fought his little adoptive brothers and sisters; he kicked and cuffed his father and mother; he fought the cat, stamped upon the kittens, was worsted in a severe battle with the hen in the back-yard; but, in revenge, nearly beat a little sucking-pig to death, whom he caught alone, and rambling near his favourite haunt, the dunghill. As for stealing, he stole the eggs, which he perforated and emptied; the butter, which he ate with or without bread, as he could find it; the sugar, which he cunningly secreted in the leaves of a Baker's *Chronicle*, that nobody in the establishment could read; and thus from the pages of history he used to suck in all he knew — thieving and lying namely; in which, for his years, he made wonderful progress. If any followers of Miss Edgeworth and

Digitized by Google

the philosophers are inclined to disbelieve this statement, or to set it down as overcharged and distorted, let them be assured that just this very picture was, of all pictures in the world, taken from nature. I, Ikey Solomons, once had a dear little brother who could steal before he could walk (and this not from encouragement, — for, if you know the world, you must know that in families of our profession the point of honour is sacred at home, — but from pure nature) — who could steal, I say, before he could walk, and lie before he could speak; and who, at four and a half years of age, having attacked my sister Rebecca on some question of lollipops, had smitten her on the elbow with a fire-shovel, apologised to us by saying simply, "—— her, I wish it had been her head!" Dear, dear Aminadab! I think of you, and laugh these philosophers to scorn. Nature made you for that career which you fulfilled: you were from your birth to your dying a scoundrel; you *could n't* have been anything else, however your lot was cast; and blessed it was that you were born among the prigs, — for had you been of any other profession, alas! alas! what ills might you have done? As I have heard the author of "Richelieu," "Siamese Twins," &c. say, "Poëta nascitur non fit," which means that though he had tried ever so much to be a poet, it was all moonshine: in the like manner, I say, "*Roagus* nascitur non fit." We have it from nature, and so a fig for Miss Edgeworth.

In this manner, then, while his father, blessed with a wealthy wife, was leading, in a fine house, the life of a galley-slave; while his mother, married to Mr. Hayes, and made an honest woman of, as the saying is, was passing her time respectably in Warwickshire, Mr. Thomas Billings was inhabiting the same county, not cared for by either of them; but ordained by Fate to join them one day, and have a mighty influence upon the for-

Digitized by Google

tunes of both. For, as it has often happened to the traveller in the York or the Exeter coach to fall snugly asleep in his corner, and on awaking suddenly to find himself sixty or seventy miles from the place where Somnus first visited him: as, we say, although you sit still, Time, poor wretch, keeps perpetually running on, and so must run day and night, with never a pause or a halt of five minutes to get a drink, until his dying day; let the reader imagine that since he left Mrs. Hayes and all the other worthy personages of this history, in the last chapter, seven years have sped away; during which, all our heroes and heroines have been accomplishing their destinies.

Seven years of country carpentering, or other trading, on the part of a husband, of ceaseless scolding, violence, and discontent on the part of a wife, are not pleasant to describe: so we shall omit altogether any account of the early married life of Mr. and Mrs. John Hayes. The "Newgate Calendar" (to which excellent compilation we and the *other* popular novelists of the day can never be sufficiently grateful) states that Hayes left his house three or four times during this period, and, urged by the restless humours of his wife, tried several professions; returning, however, as he grew weary of each, to his wife and his paternal home. After a certain time his parents died, and by their demise he succeeded to a small property, and the carpentering business, which he for some time followed.

What, then, in the meanwhile, had become of Captain Wood, or Brock, and Ensign Macshane? — the only persons now to be accounted for in our catalogue. For about six months after their capture and release of Mr. Hayes, those noble gentlemen had followed, with much prudence and success, that trade which the celebrated and polite Duval, the ingenious Sheppard, the dauntless

Digitized by Google

Turpin, and indeed many other heroes of our most popular novels, had pursued, or were pursuing, in their time. And so considerable were said to be Captain Wood's gains, that reports were abroad of his having somewhere a buried treasure; to which he might have added more, had not Fate suddenly cut short his career as a prig. He and the Ensign were — shame to say — transported for stealing three pewter-pots off a railing at Exeter; and not being known in the town, which they had only reached that morning, they were detained by no further charges, but simply condemned on this one. For this misdemeanor, her Majesty's Government vindictively sent them for seven years beyond the sea; and, as the fashion then was, sold the use of their bodies to Virginian planters during that space of time. It is thus, alas! that the strong are always used to deal with the weak, and many an honest fellow has been led to rue his unfortunate difference with the law.

Thus, then, we have settled all scores. The Count is in Holland with his wife; Mrs. Cat in Warwickshire along with her excellent husband; Master Thomas Billings with his adoptive parents in the same county; and the two military gentlemen watching the progress and cultivation of the tobacco and cotton plant in the New World. All these things having passed between the acts, dingaring-a-dingaring-a-dingledingle-ding, the drop draws up, and the next act begins. By the way, the play *ends* with a drop: but that is neither here nor there.

. . . . . .

[Here, as in a theatre, the orchestra is supposed to play something melodious. The people get up, shake themselves, yawn, and settle down in their seats again. "Porter, ale, ginger-beer, cider," comes round, squeezing through the legs of the gentlemen in the pit. Nobody takes anything as usual; and lo! the curtain rises again. "'Sh, 'shsh, 'shshshhh! Hats off!" says everybody.]

. . . . . .

Digitized by Google

Mrs. Hayes had now been for six years the adored wife of Mr. Hayes, and no offspring had arisen to bless their loves and perpetuate their name. She had obtained a complete mastery over her lord and master; and having had, as far as was in that gentleman's power, every single wish gratified that she could demand, in the way of dress, treats to Coventry and Birmingham, drink, and what not — for, though a hard man, John Hayes had learned to spend his money pretty freely on himself and her — having had all her wishes gratified, it was natural that she should begin to find out some more; and the next whim she hit upon was to be restored to her child. It may be as well to state that she had never informed her husband of the existence of that phenomenon, although he was aware of his wife's former connection with the Count, — Mrs. Hayes, in their matrimonial quarrels, invariably taunting him with accounts of her former splendour and happiness, and with his own meanness of taste in condescending to take up with his Excellency's leavings.

She determined, then (but as yet had not confided her determination to her husband), she would have her boy; although in her seven years' residence within twenty miles of him she had never once thought of seeing him: and the kind reader knows that when his excellent lady determines on a thing — a shawl, or an opera-box, or a new carriage, or twenty-four singing-lessons from Tamburini, or a night at the "Eagle Tavern" City Road, or a ride in a buss to Richmond and tea and brandy-and-water at "Rose Cottage Hotel" — the reader, high or low, knows that when Mrs. Reader desires a thing, have it she will; you may just as well talk of avoiding her as of avoiding gout, bills, or grey hairs — and that you know is impossible. I, for my part, have had all three — ay, and a wife too.

Digitized by Google

I say that when a woman is resolved on a thing, happen it will: if husbands refuse, Fate will interfere (*flectere si nequeo*, &c. ; but quotations are odious). And some hidden power was working in the case of Mrs. Hayes, and, for its own awful purposes, lending her its aid.

Who has not felt how he works — the dreadful, conquering Spirit of Ill? Who cannot see, in the circle of his own society, the fated and foredoomed to woe and evil? Some call the doctrine of destiny a dark creed; but, for me, I would fain try and think it a consolatory one. It is better, with all one's sins upon one's head, to deem oneself in the hands of Fate than to think — with our fierce passions and weak repentances; with our resolves so loud, so vain, so ludicrously, despicably weak and frail; with our dim, wavering, wretched conceits about virtue, and our irresistible propensity to wrong, — that we are the workers of our future sorrow or happiness. If we depend on our strength, what is it against mighty circumstance? If we look to ourselves, what hope have we? Look back at the whole of your life, and see how Fate has mastered you and it. Think of your disappointments and your successes. Has *your* striving influenced one or the other? A fit of indigestion puts itself between you and honours and reputation; an apple plops on your nose, and makes you a world's wonder and glory; a fit of poverty makes a rascal of you, who were, and are still, an honest man; clubs, trumps, or six lucky mains at dice, make an honest man for life of you, who ever were, will be, and are a rascal. Who sends the illness? who causes the apple to fall? who deprives you of your worldly goods? or who shuffles the cards, and brings trumps, honour, virtue, and prosperity back again? You call it chance; ay, and so it is chance that when

Digitized by Google

the floor gives way, and the rope stretches tight, the poor wretch before St. Sepulchre's clock dies. Only with us, clear-sighted mortals as we are, we can't *see* the rope by which we hang, and know not when or how the drop may fall.

But *revenons à nos moutons:* let us return to that sweet lamb, Master Thomas, and the milk-white ewe, Mrs. Cat. Seven years had passed away, and she began to think that she should very much like to see her child once more. It was written that she should; and you shall hear how, soon after, without any great exertions of hers, back he came to her.

In the month of July, in the year 1715, there came down a road about ten miles from the city of Worcester, two gentlemen; not mounted, Templar-like, upon one horse, but having a horse between them — a sorry bay, with a sorry saddle, and a large pack behind it; on which each by turn took a ride. Of the two, one was a man of excessive stature, with red hair, a very prominent nose, and a faded military dress; while the other, an old weather-beaten, sober-looking personage, wore the costume of a civilian — both man and dress appearing to have reached the autumnal, or seedy state. However, the pair seemed, in spite of their apparent poverty, to be passably merry. The old gentleman rode the horse; and had, in the course of their journey, ridden him two miles at least in every three. The tall one walked with immense strides by his side; and seemed, indeed, as if he could have quickly outstripped the four-footed animal, had he chosen to exert his speed, or had not affection for his comrade retained him at his stirrup.

A short time previously the horse had cast a shoe; and this the tall man on foot had gathered up, and was holding in his hand: it having been voted that the first

Digitized by Google

blacksmith to whose shop they should come should be called upon to fit it again upon the bay horse.

"Do you remimber this counthry, Meejor?" said the tall man, who was looking about him very much pleased, and sucking a flower. "I think thim green cornfields is prettier looking at than the d—— tobacky out yondther, and bad luck to it!"

"I recollect the place right well, and some queer pranks we played here seven years agone," responded the gentleman addressed as Major. "You remember that man and his wife, whom we took in pawn at the 'Three Rooks?'"

"And the landlady only hung last Michaelmas?" said the tall man, parenthetically.

"Hang the landlady! — we 've got all we ever would out of *her*, you know. But about the man and woman. You went after the chap's mother, and, like a jackass, as you are, let him loose. Well, the woman was that Catherine that you 've often heard me talk about. I like the wench, —— her, for I almost brought her up; and she was for a year or two along with that scoundrel Galgenstein, who has been the cause of my ruin."

"The infernal blackguard and ruffian!" said the tall man, who, with his companion, has no doubt been recognised by the reader.

"Well, this Catherine had a child by Galgenstein; and somewhere here hard by the woman lived to whom we carried the brat to nurse. She was the wife of a blacksmith, one Billings: it won't be out of the way to get our horse shod at his house, if he is alive still, and we may learn something about the little beast. I should be glad to see the mother well enough."

"Do I remimber her?" said the Ensign. "Do I remimber whisky? Sure I do, and the snivelling sneak her husband, and the stout old lady her mother-in-law,

Digitized by Google

and the dirty one-eyed ruffian who sold me the parson's hat, that had so nearly brought me into trouble. Oh, but it was a rare rise we got out of them chaps, and the old landlady that 's hanged too!" And here both Ensign Macshane and Major Brock, or Wood, grinned, and showed much satisfaction.

It will be necessary to explain the reason of it. We gave the British public to understand that the landlady of the "Three Rooks," at Worcester, was a notorious fence, or banker of thieves; that is, a purchaser of their merchandise. In her hands Mr. Brock and his companion had left property to the amount of sixty or seventy pounds, which was secreted in a cunning recess in a chamber of the "Three Rooks," known only to the landlady and the gentlemen who banked with her; and in this place, Mr. Sicklop, the one-eyed man who had joined in the Hayes adventure, his comrade, and one or two of the topping prigs of the county, were free. Mr. Sicklop had been shot dead in a night attack near Bath; the landlady had been suddenly hanged, as an accomplice in another case of robbery; and when, on their return from Virginia, our two heroes, whose hopes of livelihood depended upon it, had bent their steps towards Worcester, they were not a little frightened to hear of the cruel fate of the hostess and many of the amiable frequenters of the "Three Rooks." All the goodly company were separated; the house was no longer an inn. Was the money gone too? At least it was worth while to look — which Messrs. Brock and Macshane determined to do.

The house being now a private one, Mr. Brock, with a genius that was above his station, visited its owner, with a huge portfolio under his arm, and, in the character of a painter, requested permission to take a particular sketch from a particular window. The Ensign

Digitized by Google

followed with the artist's materials (consisting simply of a screw-driver and a crow-bar); and it is hardly necessary to say that, when admission was granted to them, they opened the well-known door, and to their inexpressible satisfaction discovered, not their own peculiar savings exactly, for these had been appropriated instantly on hearing of their transportation, but stores of money and goods to the amount of near three hundred pounds: to which Mr. Macshane said they had as just and honourable a right as anybody else. And so they had as just a right as anybody — except the original owners; but who was to discover them?

With this booty they set out on their journey — anywhere, for they knew not whither; and it so chanced that when their horse's shoe came off, they were within a few furlongs of the cottage of Mr. Billings, the blacksmith. As they came near, they were saluted by tremendous roars issuing from the smithy. A small boy was held across the bellows, two or three children of smaller and larger growth were holding him down, and many others of the village were gazing in at the window, while a man, half-naked, was lashing the little boy with a whip, and occasioning the cries heard by the travellers. As the horse drew up, the operator looked at the newcomers for a moment, and then proceeded incontinently with his work; belabouring the child more fiercely than ever.

When he had done, he turned round to the newcomers and asked how he could serve them? whereupon Mr. Wood (for such was the name he adopted, and by such we shall call him to the end) wittily remarked that however he might wish to serve *them*, he seemed mightily inclined to serve that young gentleman first.

"It 's no joking matter," said the blacksmith: "if I don't serve him so now, he 'll be worse off in his old age.

Digitized by Google

He 'll come to the gallows, as sure as his name is Bill — never mind what his name is." And so saying, he gave the urchin another cut; which elicited, of course, another scream.

"Oh! his name is Bill?" said Captain Wood.

"His name 's *not* Bill!" said the blacksmith, sulkily. "He 's no name; and no heart, neither. My wife took the brat in, seven years ago, from a beggarly French chap to nurse, and she kept him, for she was a good soul" (here his eyes began to wink), "and she 's — she 's gone now" (here he began fairly to blubber). "And d—— him, out of love for her, I kept him too, and the scoundrel is a liar and a thief. This blessed day, merely to vex me and my boys here, he spoke ill of her he did, and I 'll — cut — his —— life — out — I — will!" and with each word honest Mulciber applied a whack on the body of little Tom Billings; who, by shrill shrieks, and oaths in treble, acknowledged the receipt of the blows.

"Come, come," said Mr. Wood, "set the boy down, and the bellows a-going; my horse wants shoeing, and the poor lad has had strapping enough."

The blacksmith obeyed, and cast poor Master Thomas loose. As he staggered away and looked back at his tormentor, his countenance assumed an expression which made Mr. Wood say, grasping hold of Macshane's arm, "It 's the boy, it 's the boy! when his mother gave Galgenstein the laudanum, she had the self-same look with her."

"Had she really now?" said Mr. Macshane. "And pree, Meejor, who *was* his mother?"

"Mrs. Cat, you fool!" answered Wood.

"Then, upon my secred word of honour, she 's a mighty fine *kitten* anyhow, my dear. Aha!"

"They don't *drown* such kittens," said Mr. Wood, archly; and Macshane, taking the allusion, clapped his

Digitized by Google

finger to his nose in token of perfect approbation of his commander's sentiment.

While the blacksmith was shoeing the horse, Mr. Wood asked him many questions concerning the lad whom he had just been chastising, and succeeded, beyond a doubt, in establishing his identity with the child whom Catherine Hall had brought into the world seven years since. Billings told him of all the virtues of his wife, and the manifold crimes of the lad: how he stole, and fought, and lied, and swore; and though the youngest under his roof, exercised the most baneful influence over all the rest of his family. He was determined at last, he said, to put him to the parish, for he did not dare to keep him.

"He 's a fine whelp, and would fetch ten pieces in Virginny," sighed the Ensign.

"Crimp, of Bristol, would give five for him," said Mr. Wood, ruminating.

"Why not take him?" said the Ensign.

"Faith, why not?" said Mr. Wood. "His keep, meanwhile, will not be sixpence a day." Then turning round to the blacksmith, "Mr. Billings," said he, "you will be surprised, perhaps, to hear that I know everything regarding that poor lad's history. His mother was an unfortunate lady of high family, now no more; his father a German nobleman, Count de Galgenstein by name."

"The very man!" said Billings: "a young, fair-haired man, who came here with the child, and a dragoon sergeant."

"Count de Galgenstein by name, who, on the point of death, recommended the infant to me."

"And did he pay you seven years' boarding?" said Mr. Billings, who was quite alive at the very idea.

Digitized by Google

"Alas, sir, not a jot! he died, sir, six hundred pounds in my debt; did n't he, Ensign?"

"Six hundred, upon my secred honour! I remember when he got into the house along with the poli——"

"Psha! what matters it?" here broke out Mr. Wood, looking fiercely at the Ensign. "Six hundred pounds he owes me: how was he to pay you? But he told me to take charge of this boy, if I found him; and found him I have, and *will* take charge of him, if you will hand him over."

"Send our Tom!" cried Billings. And when that youth appeared, scowling, and yet trembling, and prepared, as it seemed, for another castigation, his father, to his surprise, asked him if he was willing to go along with those gentlemen, or whether he would be a good lad and stay with him.

Mr. Tom replied immediately, "I won't be a good lad, and I 'd rather go to —— than stay with you!"

"Will you leave your brothers and sisters?" said Billings, looking very dismal.

"Hang my brothers and sisters — I hate 'em; and, besides, I have n't got any!"

"But you had a good mother, had n't you, Tom?"

Tom paused for a moment.

"Mother 's gone," said he, "and you flog me, and I 'll go with these men."

"Well, then, go thy ways," said Billings, starting up in a passion: "go thy ways for a graceless reprobate; and if this gentleman will take you, he may do so."

After some further parley, the conversation ended, and the next morning Mr. Wood's party consisted of three: a little boy being mounted upon the bay horse, in addition to the Ensign or himself; and the whole company went journeying towards Bristol.

. . . . . .

Digitized by Google

We have said that Mrs. Hayes had, on a sudden, taken a fit of maternal affection, and was bent upon being restored to her child; and that benign destiny which watched over the life of this lucky lady instantly set about gratifying her wish, and, without cost to herself of coach-hire or saddle-horse, sent the young gentleman very quickly to her arms. The village in which the Hayeses dwelt was but a very few miles out of the road from Bristol; whither, on the benevolent mission above hinted at, our party of worthies were bound: and coming, towards the afternoon, in sight of the house of that very Justice Ballance who had been so nearly the ruin of Ensign Macshane, that officer narrated, for the hundredth time, and with much glee, the circumstances which had then befallen him, and the manner in which Mrs. Hayes, the elder, had come forward to his rescue.

"Suppose we go and see the old girl?" suggested Mr. Wood. "No harm can come to us now." And his comrade, always assenting, they wound their way towards the village, and reached it as the evening came on. In the public-house where they rested, Wood made inquiries concerning the Hayes family; was informed of the death of the old couple, of the establishment of John Hayes and his wife in their place, and of the kind of life that these latter led together. When all these points had been imparted to him, he ruminated much: an expression of sublime triumph and exultation at length lighted up his features. "I think, Tim," said he at last, "that we can make more than five pieces of that boy."

"Oh, in coorse!" said Timothy Macshane, Esq.; who always agreed with his "Meejor."

"In coorse, you fool! and how? I'll tell you how. This Hayes is well to do in the world, and ——"

"And we'll nab him again — ha, ha!" roared out

Digitized by Google

Macshane. "By my secred honour, Meejor, there never was a gineral like you at a strathyjam!"

"Peace, you bellowing donkey, and don't wake the child. The man is well to do, his wife rules him, and they have no children. Now, either she will be very glad to have the boy back again, and pay for the finding of him, or else she has said nothing about him, and will pay us for being silent too: or, at any rate, Hayes himself will be ashamed at finding his wife the mother of a child a year older than his marriage, and will pay for the keeping of the brat away. There 's profit, my dear, in any one of the cases, or my name 's not Peter Brock."

When the Ensign understood this wondrous argument, he would fain have fallen on his knees and worshipped his friend and guide. They began operations, almost immediately, by an attack on Mrs. Hayes. On hearing, as she did in private interview with the ex-corporal the next morning, that her son was found, she was agitated by both of the passions which Wood attributed to her. She longed to have the boy back, and would give any reasonable sum to see him; but she dreaded exposure, and would pay equally to avoid that. How could she gain the one point and escape the other?

Mrs. Hayes hit upon an expedient which, I am given to understand, is not uncommon now-a-days. She suddenly discovered that she had a dear brother, who had been obliged to fly the country in consequence of having joined the Pretender, and had died in France, leaving behind him an only son. This boy her brother had, with his last breath, recommended to her protection, and had confided him to the charge of a brother officer who was now in the country, and would speedily make his appearance; and, to put the story beyond a doubt, Mr. Wood wrote the letter from her brother

Digitized by Google

stating all these particulars, and Ensign Macshane received full instructions how to perform the part of the "brother officer." What consideration Mr. Wood received for his services, we cannot say; only it is well known that Mr. Hayes caused to be committed to gaol a young apprentice in his service, charged with having broken open a cupboard in which Mr. Hayes had forty guineas in gold and silver, and to which none but he and his wife had access.

Having made these arrangements, the Corporal and his little party decamped to a short distance, and Mrs. Catherine was left to prepare her husband for a speedy addition to his family, in the shape of this darling nephew. John Hayes received the news with anything but pleasure. He had never heard of any brother of Catherine's; she had been bred at the workhouse, and nobody ever hinted that she had relatives: but it is easy for a lady of moderate genius to invent circumstances; and with lies, tears, threats, coaxings, oaths, and other blandishments, she compelled him to submit.

Two days afterwards, as Mr. Hayes was working in his shop with his lady seated beside him, the trampling of a horse was heard in his court-yard, and a gentleman, of huge stature, descended from it, and strode into the shop. His figure was wrapped in a large cloak; but Mr. Hayes could not help fancying that he had somewhere seen his face before.

"This, I preshoom," said the gentleman, "is Misther Hayes, that I have come so many miles to see, and this is his amiable lady? I was the most intimate frind, madam, of your laminted brother, who died in King Lewis's service, and whose last touching letthers I despatched to you two days ago. I have with me a further precious token of my dear friend, Captain Hall—it is *here*."

Digitized by Google

CATHERINE'S Present to Mr. Hayes

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

And so saying, the military gentleman, with one arm, removed his cloak, and stretching forward the other into Hayes's face almost, stretched likewise forward a little boy, grinning and sprawling in the air, and prevented only from falling to the ground by the hold which the Ensign kept of the waistband of his little coat and breeches.

"Is n't he a pretty boy?" said Mrs. Hayes, sidling up to her husband tenderly, and pressing one of Mr. Hayes's hands.

. . . . . .

About the lad's beauty it is needless to say what the carpenter thought; but that night, and for many, many nights after, the lad stayed at Mr. Hayes's.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER VIII

ENUMERATES THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF MASTER THOMAS BILLINGS — INTRODUCES BROCK AS DR. WOOD — AND ANNOUNCES THE EXECUTION OF ENSIGN MACSHANE

WE are obliged, in recording this history, to follow accurately that great authority, the "Calendarium Newgaticum Roagorumque Registerium," of which every lover of literature in the present day knows the value; and as that remarkable work totally discards all the unities in its narratives, and reckons the life of its heroes only by their actions, and not by periods of time, we must follow in the wake of this mighty ark — a humble cockboat. When it pauses, we pause; when it runs ten knots an hour, we run with the same celerity; and as, in order to carry the reader from the penultimate chapter of this work unto the last chapter, we were compelled to make him leap over a gap of seven blank years, ten years more must likewise be granted to us before we are at liberty to resume our history.

During that period, Master Thomas Billings had been under the especial care of his mother; and, as may be imagined, he rather increased than diminished the accomplishments for which he had been remarkable while under the roof of his foster-father. And with this advantage, that while at the blacksmith's, and only three or four years of age, his virtues were necessarily appreciated only in his family circle, and among those few

Digitized by Google

acquaintances of his own time of life whom a youth of three can be expected to meet in the alleys or over the gutters of a small country hamlet, — in his mother's residence, his circle extended with his own growth, and he began to give proofs of those powers of which in infancy there had been only encouraging indications. Thus it was nowise remarkable that a child of four years should not know his letters, and should have had a great disinclination to learn them; but when a young man of fifteen showed the same creditable ignorance, the same undeviating dislike, it was easy to see that he possessed much resolution and perseverance. When it was remarked, too, that, in case of any difference, he not only beat the usher, but by no means disdained to torment and bully the very smallest boys of the school, it was easy to see that his mind was comprehensive and careful, as well as courageous and grasping. As it was said of the Duke of Wellington, in the Peninsula, that he had a thought for everybody — from Lord Hill to the smallest drummer in the army — in like manner Tom Billings bestowed *his* attention on high and low; but in the shape of blows: he would fight the strongest and kick the smallest, and was always at work with one or the other. At thirteen, when he was removed from the establishment whither he had been sent, he was the cock of the school out of doors, and the very last boy in. He used to let the little boys and new-comers pass him by, and laugh; but he always belaboured them unmercifully afterwards; and then it was, he said, *his* turn to laugh. With such a pugnacious turn, Tom Billings ought to have been made a soldier and might have died a marshal; but, by an unlucky ordinance of fate, he was made a tailor, and died a —— never mind what for the present; suffice it to say, that he was suddenly cut off at a very early period of his existence, by a

Digitized by Google

disease which has exercised considerable ravages among the British youth.

By consulting the authority above mentioned, we find that Hayes did not confine himself to the profession of a carpenter, or remain long established in the country; but was induced, by the eager spirit of Mrs. Catherine most probably, to try his fortune in the metropolis; where he lived, flourished, and died. Oxford Road, Saint Giles's, and Tottenham Court, were, at various periods of his residence in town, inhabited by him. At one place, he carried on the business of green-grocer and small-coalman; in another, he was carpenter, undertaker, and lender of money to the poor: finally, he was a lodging-house keeper in the Oxford or Tyburn Road; but continued to exercise the last-named charitable profession.

Lending as he did upon pledges, and carrying on a pretty large trade, it was not for him, of course, to inquire into the pedigree of all the pieces of plate, the bales of cloth, swords, watches, wigs, shoe-buckles, &c., that were confided by his friends to his keeping; but it is clear that his friends had the requisite confidence in him, and that he enjoyed the esteem of a class of characters who still live in history, and are admired unto this very day. The mind loves to think that, perhaps, in Mr. Hayes's back-parlour the gallant Turpin might have hob-and-nobbed with Mrs. Catherine; that here, perhaps, the noble Sheppard might have cracked his joke, or quaffed his pint of rum. Who knows but that Macheath and Paul Clifford may have crossed legs under Hayes's dinner-table? But why pause to speculate on things that might have been? why desert reality for fond imagination, or call up from their honoured graves the sacred dead? I know not: and yet, in sooth, I can never pass Cumberland Gate without a sigh, as I think

Digitized by Google

of the gallant cavaliers who traversed that road in old time. Pious priests accompanied their triumphs; their chariots were surrounded by hosts of glittering javelin-men. As the slave at the car of the Roman conqueror shouted, "Remember thou art mortal!" before the eyes of the British warrior rode the undertaker and his coffin, telling him that he too must die! Mark well the spot! A hundred years ago Albion Street (where comic Power dwelt, Milesia's darling son) — Albion Street was a desert. The square of Connaught was without its penultimate, and, strictly speaking, *naught*. The Edgware Road was then a road, 't is true; with tinkling waggons passing now and then, and fragrant walls of snowy hawthorn blossoms. The ploughman whistled over Nutford Place; down the green solitudes of Sovereign Street the merry milkmaid led the lowing kine. Here, then, in the midst of green fields and sweet air — before ever omnibuses were, and when Pineapple Turnpike and Terrace were alike unknown — here stood Tyburn: and on the road towards it, perhaps to enjoy the prospect, stood, in the year 1725, the habitation of Mr. John Hayes.

One fine morning in the year 1725, Mrs. Hayes, who had been abroad in her best hat and riding-hood; Mr. Hayes, who for a wonder had accompanied her; and Mrs. Springatt, a lodger, who for a remuneration had the honour of sharing Mrs. Hayes's friendship and table: all returned, smiling and rosy, at about half-past ten o'clock, from a walk which they had taken to Bayswater. Many thousands of people were likewise seen flocking down the Oxford Road; and you would rather have thought, from the smartness of their appearance and the pleasure depicted in their countenances, that they were just issuing from a sermon, than quitting the ceremony which they had been to attend.

Digitized by Google

The fact is, that they had just been to see a gentleman hanged, — a cheap pleasure, which the Hayes family never denied themselves; and they returned home with a good appetite to breakfast, braced by the walk, and tickled into hunger as it were by the spectacle. I can recollect, when I was a gyp at Cambridge, that the "men" used to have breakfast-parties for the very same purpose; and the exhibition of the morning acted infallibly upon the stomach, and caused the young students to eat with much voracity.

Well, Mrs. Catherine, a handsome, well-dressed, plump, rosy woman, of three or four and thirty (and when, my dear, is a woman handsomer than at that age?) came in quite merrily from her walk, and entered the back-parlour, which looked into a pleasant yard, or garden, whereon the sun was shining very gaily; and where, at a table covered with a nice white cloth, laid out with some silver mugs, too, and knives, all with different crests and patterns, sat an old gentleman reading in an old book.

"Here we are at last, Doctor," said Mrs. Hayes, "and here's his speech." She produced the little halfpenny tract, which to this day is sold at the gallows-foot upon the death of every offender. "I 've seen a many men turned off, to be sure; but I never did see one who bore it more like a man than he did."

"My dear," said the gentleman addressed as Doctor, "he was as cool and as brave as steel, and no more minded hanging than tooth-drawing."

"It was the drink that ruined him," said Mrs. Cat.

"Drink, and bad company. I warned him, my dear, — I warned him years ago: and directly he got into Wild's gang, I knew that he had not a year to run. Ah, why, my love, will men continue such dangerous courses," continued the Doctor, with a sigh, "and

Digitized by Google

jeopardy their lives for a miserable watch or a snuff-box, of which Mr. Wild takes three-fourths of the produce? But here comes the breakfast; and, egad, I am as hungry as a lad of twenty."

Indeed, at this moment Mrs. Hayes's servant appeared with a smoking dish of bacon and greens; and Mr. Hayes himself ascended from the cellar (of which he kept the key), bearing with him a tolerably large jug of small-beer. To this repast the Doctor, Mrs. Springatt (the other lodger), and Mr. and Mrs. Hayes, proceeded with great alacrity. A fifth cover was laid, but not used; the company remarking that "Tom had very likely found some acquaintances at Tyburn, with whom he might choose to pass the morning."

Tom was Master Thomas Billings, now of the age of sixteen: slim, smart, five feet ten inches in height, handsome, sallow in complexion, black-eyed, and black-haired. Mr. Billings was apprentice to a tailor, of tolerable practice, who was to take him into partnership at the end of his term. It was supposed, and with reason, that Tom would not fail to make a fortune in this business; of which the present head was one Beinkleider, a German. Beinkleider was skilful in his trade (after the manner of his nation, which in breeches and metaphysics — in inexpressibles and incomprehensibles — may instruct all Europe), but too fond of his pleasure. Some promissory-notes of his had found their way into Hayes's hands, and had given him the means not only of providing Master Billings with a cheap apprenticeship, and a cheap partnership afterwards; but would empower him, in one or two years after the young partner had joined the firm, to eject the old one altogether. So that there was every prospect that, when Mr. Billings was twenty-one years of age, poor

Digitized by Google

Beinkleider would have to act, not as his master, but his journeyman.

Tom was a very precocious youth; was supplied by a doting mother with plenty of pocket-money, and spent it with a number of lively companions of both sexes, at plays, bull-baitings, fairs, jolly parties on the river, and such like innocent amusements. He could throw a main, too, as well as his elders; had pinked his man, in a row at Madam King's in the Piazza; and was much respected at the Roundhouse.

Mr. Hayes was not very fond of this promising young gentleman; indeed, he had the baseness to bear malice, because, in a quarrel which occurred about two years previously, he, Hayes, being desirous to chastise Mr. Billings, had found himself not only quite incompetent, but actually at the mercy of the boy; who struck him over the head with a joint-stool, felled him to the ground, and swore he would have his life. The Doctor, who was then also a lodger at Mr. Hayes's, interposed, and restored the combatants, not to friendship, but to peace. Hayes never afterwards attempted to lift his hand to the young man, but contented himself with hating him profoundly. In this sentiment Mr. Billings participated cordially; and, quite unlike Mr. Hayes, who never dared to show his dislike, used on every occasion when they met, by actions, looks, words, sneers, and curses, to let his step-father know the opinion which he had of him. Why did not Hayes discard the boy altogether? Because, if he did so, he was really afraid of his life, and because he trembled before Mrs. Hayes, his lady, as the leaf trembles before the tempest in October. His breath was not his own, but hers; his money, too, had been chiefly of her getting, — for though he was as stingy and mean as mortal man can be, and so likely to save much, he had not the genius for *getting*

Digitized by Google

which Mrs. Hayes possessed. She kept his books (for she had learned to read and write by this time), she made his bargains, and she directed the operations of the poor-spirited little capitalist. When bills became due, and creditors pressed for time, then she brought Hayes's own professional merits into play. The man was as deaf and cold as a rock; never did poor tradesman gain a penny from him; never were the bailiffs delayed one single minute from their prey. The Beinkleider business, for instance, showed pretty well the genius of the two. Hayes was for closing with him at once; but his wife saw the vast profits which might be drawn out of him, and arranged the apprenticeship and the partnership before alluded to. The woman heartily scorned and spit upon her husband, who fawned upon her like a spaniel. She loved good cheer; she did not want for a certain kind of generosity. The only feeling that Hayes had for any one except himself was for his wife, whom he held in a cowardly awe and attachment: he liked drink, too, which made him chirping and merry, and accepted willingly any treats that his acquaintances might offer him; but he would suffer agonies when his wife brought or ordered from the cellar a bottle of wine.

And now for the Doctor. He was about seventy years of age. He had been much abroad; he was of a sober, cheerful aspect; he dressed handsomely and quietly in a broad hat and cassock; but saw no company except the few friends whom he met at the coffee-house. He had an income of about a hundred pounds, which he promised to leave to young Billings. He was amused with the lad, and fond of his mother, and had boarded with them for some years past. The Doctor, in fact, was our old friend Corporal Brock; the Rev. Dr. Wood now, as he had been Major Wood fifteen years back.

Digitized by Google

Any one who has read the former part of this history must have seen that we have spoken throughout with invariable respect of Mr. Brock; and that in every circumstance in which he has appeared, he has acted not only with prudence, but often with genius. The early obstacle to Mr. Brock's success was want of conduct simply. Drink, women, play — how many a brave fellow have they ruined! — had pulled Brock down as often as his merit had carried him up. When a man's passion for play has brought him to be a scoundrel, it at once ceases to be hurtful to him in a worldly point of view; he cheats, and wins. It is only for the idle and luxurious that women retain their fascinations to a very late period; and Brock's passions had been whipped out of him in Virginia: where much ill health, ill treatment, hard labour, and hard food, speedily put an end to them. He forgot there even how to drink; rum or wine made this poor declining gentleman so ill that he could indulge in them no longer; and so his three vices were cured. Had he been ambitious, there is little doubt but that Mr. Brock, on his return from transportation, might have risen in the world; but he was old and a philosopher: he did not care about rising. Living was cheaper in those days, and interest for money higher: when he had amassed about six hundred pounds, he purchased an annuity of seventy-two pounds, and gave out — why should he not? — that he had the capital as well as the interest. After leaving the Hayes family in the country, he found them again in London: he took up his abode with them, and was attached to the mother and the son. Do you suppose that rascals have not affections like other people? hearts, madam — ay, hearts — and family ties which they cherish? As the Doctor lived on with this charming family, he began to regret that he had sunk all his money in annuities, and

Digitized by Google

could not, as he repeatedly vowed he would, leave his savings to his adopted children.

He felt an indescribable pleasure ("*suave mari magno*," &c.) in watching the storms and tempests of the Hayes *ménage*. He used to encourage Mrs. Catherine into anger when, haply, that lady's fits of calm would last too long; he used to warm up the disputes between wife and husband, mother and son, and enjoy them beyond expression: they served him for daily amusement; and he used to laugh until the tears ran down his venerable cheeks at the accounts which young Tom continually brought him of his pranks abroad, among watchmen and constables, at taverns or elsewhere.

When, therefore, as the party were discussing their bacon and cabbage, before which the Rev. Doctor with much gravity said grace, Master Tom entered, Doctor Wood, who had before been rather gloomy, immediately brightened up, and made a place for Billings between himself and Mrs. Catherine.

"How do, old cock?" said that young gentleman familiarly. "How goes it, mother?" And so saying, he seized eagerly upon the jug of beer which Mr. Hayes had drawn, and from which the latter was about to help himself, and poured down his throat exactly one quart.

"Ah!" said Mr. Billings, drawing breath after a draught which he had learned accurately to gauge from the habit of drinking out of pewter measures which held precisely that quantity. — "Ah!" said Mr. Billings, drawing breath, and wiping his mouth with his sleeves, "this is very thin stuff, old Squaretoes; but my coppers have been red-hot since last night, and they wanted a sluicing."

"Should you like some ale, dear?" said Mrs. Hayes, that fond and judicious parent.

Digitized by Google

"A quart of brandy, Tom?" said Dr. Wood. "Your papa will run down to the cellar for it in a minute."

"I'll see him hanged first!" cried Mr. Hayes quite frightened.

"Oh, fie, now, you unnatural father!" said the Doctor.

The very name of father used to put Mr. Hayes in a fury. "I'm not his father, thank heaven!" said he.

"No, nor nobody else's," said Tom.

Mr. Hayes only muttered "Base-born brat!"

"His father was a gentleman, — that's more than *you* ever were!" screamed Mrs. Hayes. "His father was a man of spirit; no cowardly sneak of a carpenter, Mr. Hayes! Tom has noble blood in his veins, for all he has a tailor's appearance; and if his mother had had her right, she would be now in a coach-and-six."

"I wish I could find my father," said Tom; "for I think Polly Briggs and I would look mighty well in a coach-and-six." Tom fancied that if his father was a Count at the time of his birth, he must be a prince now; and, indeed, went among his companions by the latter august title.

"Ay, Tom, that you would," cried his mother, looking at him fondly.

"With a sword by my side, and a hat and feather, there's never a lord at St. James's would cut a finer figure."

After a little more of this talk, in which Mrs. Hayes let the company know her high opinion of her son — who, as usual, took care to show his extreme contempt for his step-father — the latter retired to his occupations; the lodger, Mrs. Springatt, who had never said a word all this time, retired to her apartment on the second floor; and, pulling out their pipes and tobacco, the old gentleman and the young one solaced themselves

Digitized by Google

with half-an-hour's more talk and smoking; while the thrifty Mrs. Hayes, opposite to them, was busy with her books.

"What's in the confessions?" said Mr. Billings to Doctor Wood. "There were six of 'em besides Mac: two for sheep, four housebreakers; but nothing of consequence, I fancy."

"There 's the paper," said Wood, archly. "Read for yourself, Tom."

Mr. Tom looked at the same time very fierce and very foolish; for, though he could drink, swear, and fight, as well as any lad of his inches in England, reading was not among his accomplishments. "I tell you what, Doctor," said he, "—— you! have no bantering with me, — for I'm not the man that will bear it, —— me!" and he threw a tremendous swaggering look across the table.

"I want you to learn to read, Tommy dear. Look at your mother there over her books: she keeps them as neat as a scrivener now, and at twenty she could make never a stroke."

"Your godfather speaks for your good, child; and for me, thou knowest that I have promised thee a gold-headed cane and periwig on the first day that thou canst read me a column of the *Flying Post*."

"Hang the periwig!" said Mr. Tom, testily. "Let my godfather read the paper himself, if he has a liking for it."

Whereupon the old gentleman put on his spectacles, and glanced over the sheet of whitey-brown paper, which, ornamented with a picture of a gallows at the top, contained the biographies of the seven unlucky individuals who had that morning suffered the penalty of the law. With the six heroes who came first in the list we have nothing to do; but have before us a copy

Digitized by Google

of the paper containing the life of No. 7, and which the Doctor read with an audible voice:

"Captain Macshane.

"The seventh victim to his own crimes was the famous highwayman, Captain Macshane, so well known as the Irish Fire-eater.

"The Captain came to the ground in a fine white lawn shirt and nightcap; and, being a Papist in his religion, was attended by Father O'Flaherty, Popish priest, and chaplain to the Bavarian Envoy.

"Captain Macshane was born of respectable parents, in the town of Clonakilty, in Ireland, being descended from most of the kings in that country. He had the honour of serving their Majesties King William and Queen Mary, and her Majesty Queen Anne, in Flanders and Spain, and obtained much credit from my Lords Marlborough and Peterborough for his valour.

"But being placed on half-pay at the end of the war, Ensign Macshane took to evil courses; and, frequenting the bagnios and dice-houses, was speedily brought to ruin. "Being at this pass, he fell in with the notorious Captain Wood, and they two together committed many atrocious robberies in the inland counties; but these being too hot to hold them, they went into the west, where they were unknown. Here, however, the day of retribution arrived; for, having stolen three pewter-pots from a public-house, they, under false names, were tried at Exeter, and transported for seven years beyond the sea. Thus it is seen that Justice never sleeps; but, sooner or later, is sure to overtake the criminal.

"On their return from Virginia, a quarrel about booty arose between these two, and Macshane killed Wood in a combat that took place between them near to the town of Bristol; but a waggon coming up, Macshane

Digitized by Google

was obliged to fly without the ill-gotten wealth: so true is it, that wickedness never prospers.

"Two days afterwards, Macshane met the coach of Miss Macraw, a Scotch lady and heiress, going, for lumbago and gout, to the Bath. He at first would have robbed this lady; but such were his arts, that he induced her to marry him; and they lived together for seven years in the town of Eddenboro, in Scotland, — he passing under the name of Colonel Geraldine. The lady dying, and Macshane having expended all her wealth, he was obliged to resume his former evil courses, in order to save himself from starvation; whereupon he robbed a Scotch lord, by name the Lord of Whistlebinkie, of a mull of snuff; for which crime he was condemned to the Tolbooth prison at Eddenboro, in Scotland, and whipped many times in publick.

"These deserved punishments did not at all alter Captain Macshane's disposition; and on the 17th of February last, he stopped the Bavarian Envoy's coach on Blackheath, coming from Dover, and robbed his Excellency and his chaplain; taking from the former his money, watches, star, a fur-cloak, his sword (a very valuable one); and from the latter a Romish missal, out of which he was then reading, and a case-bottle."

"The Bavarian Envoy!" said Tom parenthetically. "My master, Beinkleider, was his lordship's regimental tailor in Germany, and is now making a court suit for him. It will be a matter of a hundred pounds to him, I warrant."

Dr. Wood resumed his reading. "Hum — hum! A Romish missal, out of which he was reading, and a case-bottle.

"By means of the famous Mr. Wild, this notorious criminal was brought to justice, and the case-bottle and missal have been restored to Father O'Flaherty.

"During his confinement in Newgate, Mr. Macshane

Digitized by Google

could not be brought to express any contrition for his crimes, except that of having killed his commanding officer. For this Wood he pretended an excessive sorrow, and vowed that usquebaugh had been the cause of his death, — indeed, in prison he partook of no other liquor, and drunk a bottle of it on the day before his death.

"He was visited by several of the clergy and gentry in his cell; among others, by the Popish priest whom he had robbed, Father O'Flaherty, before mentioned, who attended him likewise in his last moments (if that idolatrous worship may be called attention); and likewise by the Father's patron, the Bavarian Ambassador, his Excellency Count Maximilian de Galgenstein."

. . . . . .

As old Wood came to these words, he paused to give them utterance.

"What! Max?" screamed Mrs. Hayes, letting her ink-bottle fall over her ledgers.

"Why, be hanged if it be n't my father!" said Mr. Billings.

"Your father, sure enough, unless there be others of his name, and unless the scoundrel is hanged," said the Doctor — sinking his voice, however, at the end of the sentence.

Mr. Billings broke his pipe in an agony of joy. "I think we 'll have the coach now, mother," says he; "and I 'm blessed if Polly Briggs shall not look as fine as a duchess."

"Polly Briggs is a low slut, Tom, and not fit for the likes of you, his Excellency's son. Oh, fie! You must be a gentleman now, sirrah; and I doubt whether I shan't take you away from that odious tailor's shop altogether."

To this proposition Mr. Billings objected altogether;

Digitized by Google

for, besides Mrs. Briggs before alluded to, the young gentleman was much attached to his master's daughter, Mrs. Margaret Gretel, or Gretchen Beinkleider.

"No," says he. "There will be time to think of that hereafter, ma'am. If my Pa makes a man of me, why, of course, the shop may go to the deuce, for what I care; but we had better wait, look you, for something certain, before we give up such a pretty bird in the hand as this."

"He speaks like Solomon," said the Doctor.

"I always said he would be a credit to his old mother, didn't I, Brock?" cried Mrs. Cat, embracing her son very affectionately. "A credit to her; ay, I warrant, a real blessing! And dost thou want any money, Tom? for a lord's son must not go about without a few pieces in his pocket. And I tell thee, Tommy, thou must go and see his lordship; and thou shalt have a piece of brocade for a waistcoat, thou shalt; ay, and the silver-hilted sword I told thee of: but oh, Tommy, Tommy! have a care, and don't be a-drawing of it in naughty company at the gaming-houses, or at the ——"

"A drawing of fiddlesticks, mother! If I go to see my father, I must have a reason for it; and instead of going with a sword in my hand, I shall take something else in it."

"The lad *is* a lad of nous," cried Dr. Wood, "although his mother does spoil him so cruelly. Look you, Madam Cat: did you not hear what he said about Beinkleider and the clothes? Tommy will just wait on the Count with his lordship's breeches. A man may learn a deal of news in the trying on of a pair of breeches."

And so it was agreed that in this manner the son should at first make his appearance before his father. Mrs. Cat gave him the piece of brocade, which, in the

Digitized by Google

course of the day, was fashioned into a smart waistcoat (for Beinkleider's shop was close by, in Cavendish Square). Mrs. Gretel, with many blushes, tied a fine blue riband round his neck; and, in a pair of silk stockings, with gold buckles to his shoes, Master Billings looked a very proper young gentleman.

"And, Tommy," said his mother, blushing and hesitating, "should Max — should his lordship ask after your — want to know if your mother is alive, you can say she is, and well, and often talks of old times. And, Tommy" (after another pause), "you need n't say anything about Mr. Hayes; only say I 'm quite well."

Mrs. Hayes looked at him as he marched down the street, a long, long way. Tom was proud and gay in his new costume, and was not unlike his father. As she looked, lo! Oxford Street disappeared, and she saw a green common, and a village, and a little inn. There was a soldier leading a pair of horses about on the green common; and in the inn sat a cavalier, so young, so merry, so beautiful! Oh, what slim white hands he had; and winning words, and tender, gentle blue eyes! Was it not an honour to a country lass that such a noble gentleman should look at her for a moment? Had he not some charm about him that she must needs obey when he whispered in her ear, "Come, follow me!" As she walked towards the lane that morning, how well she remembered each spot as she passed it, and the look it wore for the last time! How the smoke was rising from the pastures, how the fish were jumping and plashing in the millstream! There was the church, with all its windows lighted up with gold, and yonder were the reapers sweeping down the brown corn. She tried to sing as she went up the hill — what was it? She could not remember; but oh, how well she remembered the sound of the horse's hoofs, as they came

Digitized by Google

quicker, quicker — nearer, nearer! How noble he looked on his great horse! Was he thinking of her, or were they all silly words which he spoke last night, merely to pass away the time and deceive poor girls with? Would he remember them, would he?

. . . . . .

"Cat, my dear," here cried Mr. Brock, *alias* Captain, *alias* Dr. Wood, "here's the meat a-getting cold, and I am longing for my breakfast."

As they went in he looked her hard in the face. "What, *still* at it, you silly girl? I've been watching you these five minutes, Cat; and be hanged but I think a word from Galgenstein, and you would follow him as a fly does a treacle-pot?"

They went into breakfast; but though there was a hot shoulder of mutton and onion-sauce — Mrs. Catherine's favourite dish — she never touched a morsel of it.

In the meanwhile Mr. Thomas Billings, in his new clothes which his mamma had given him, in his new riband which the fair Miss Beinkleider had tied round his neck, and having his Excellency's breeches wrapped in a silk handkerchief in his right hand, turned down in the direction of Whitehall, where the Bavarian Envoy lodged. But, before he waited on him, Mr. Billings, being excessively pleased with his personal appearance, made an early visit to Mrs. Briggs, who lived in the neighbourhood of Swallow Street; and who, after expressing herself with much enthusiasm regarding her Tommy's good looks, immediately asked him what he would stand to drink? Raspberry gin being suggested, a pint of that liquor was sent for; and so great was the confidence and intimacy subsisting between these two young people, that the reader will be glad to hear that Mrs. Polly accepted every shilling of the money which Tom Billings had received from his mamma the day

Digitized by Google

before; nay, could with difficulty be prevented from seizing upon the cut-velvet breeches which he was carrying to the nobleman for whom they were made. Having paid his adieux to Mrs. Polly, Mr. Billings departed to visit his father.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER IX

INTERVIEW BETWEEN COUNT GALGENSTEIN AND MASTER THOMAS BILLINGS, WHEN HE INFORMS THE COUNT OF HIS PARENTAGE

I DON'T know in all this miserable world a more miserable spectacle than that of a young fellow of five or six and forty. The British army, that nursery of valour, turns out many of the young fellows I mean: who, having flaunted in dragoon uniforms from seventeen to six-and-thirty; having bought, sold, or swapped during that period some two hundred horses; having played, say fifteen thousand games at billiards; having drunk some six thousand bottles of wine; having consumed a reasonable number of Nugee coats, split many dozen pairs of high-heeled Hoby boots, and read the newspaper and the army-list duly, retire from the service when they have attained their eighth lustre, and saunter through the world, trailing from London to Cheltenham, and from Boulogne to Paris, and from Paris to Baden, their idleness, their ill-health, and their *ennui*. "In the morning of youth," and when seen along with whole troops of their companies, these flowers look gaudy and brilliant enough; but there is no object more dismal than one of them alone, and in its autumnal or seedy state. My friend, Captain Popjoy, is one of them who has arrived at this condition, and whom everybody knows by his title of Father Pop. A kinder, simpler, more empty-headed fellow does not

Digitized by Google

exist. He is forty-seven years old, and appears a young, good-looking man of sixty. At the time of the Army of Occupation he really was as good-looking a man as any in the Dragoons. He now uses all sorts of stratagems to cover the bald place on his head, by combing certain thin grey side-locks over it. He has, in revenge, a pair of enormous moustaches, which he dyes of the richest blue-black. His nose is a good deal larger and redder than it used to be; his eyelids have grown flat and heavy; and a little pair of red, watery eyeballs float in the midst of them: it seems as if the light which was once in those sickly green pupils had extravasated into the white part of the eye. If Pop's legs are not so firm and muscular as they used to be in those days when he took such leaps into White's buckskins, in revenge his waist is much larger. He wears a very good coat, however, and a waistband, which he lets out after dinner. Before ladies he blushes, and is as silent as a schoolboy. He calls them "modest women." His society is chiefly among young lads belonging to his former profession. He knows the best wine to be had at each tavern or café, and the waiters treat him with much respectful familiarity. He knows the names of every one of them; and shouts out "Send Markwell here!" or, "Tell Cuttriss to give us a bottle of the yellow seal!" or, "Dizzy voo, Monsure Borrel, noo donny shampang frappy," &c. He always makes the salad or the punch, and dines out three hundred days in the year: the other days you see him in a two-franc eating-house at Paris, or prowling about Rupert Street or St. Martin's Court, where you get a capital cut of meat for eightpence. He has decent lodgings and scrupulously clean linen; his animal functions are still tolerably well preserved, his spiritual have evaporated long since; he sleeps well, has no conscience, believes himself to be a respectable

Digitized by Google

fellow, and is tolerably happy on the days when he is asked out to dinner.

Poor Pop is not very high in the scale of created beings; but, if you fancy there is none lower, you are in egregious error. There was once a man who had a mysterious exhibition of an animal quite unknown to naturalists, called "the wusser." Those curious individuals who desired to see the *wusser* were introduced into an apartment where appeared before them nothing more than a little lean, shrivelled, hideous, blear-eyed, mangy pig. Every one cried out "Swindle!" and "Shame!" "Patience, gentlemen, be heasy," said the showman: "look at that there hanimal; it's a perfect phenomaly of hugliness: I engage you never see such a pig." Nobody ever had seen. "Now, gentlemen," said he, "I'll keep my promise, has per bill; and bad as that there pig is, look at this here" (he showed another). "Look at this here, and you'll see at once that it's *a wusser*." In like manner the Popjoy breed is bad enough, but it serves only to show off the Galgenstein race; which is *wusser*.

Galgenstein had led a very gay life, as the saying is, for the last fifteen years; such a gay one, that he had lost all capacity of enjoyment by this time, and only possessed inclinations without powers of gratifying them. He had grown to be exquisitely curious and fastidious about meat and drink, for instance, and all that he wanted was an appetite. He carried about with him a French cook, who could not make him eat; a doctor, who could not make him well; a mistress, of whom he was heartily sick after two days; a priest, who had been a favourite of the exemplary Dubois, and by turns used to tickle him by the imposition of a penance, or by the repetition of a tale from the *recueil* of Nocé, or La Fare. All his appetites were wasted and worn; only some

Digitized by Google

monstrosity would galvanise them into momentary action. He was in that effete state to which many noblemen of his time had arrived; who were ready to believe in ghost-raising or in gold-making, or to retire into monasteries and wear hair-shirts, or to dabble in conspiracies, or to die in love with little cook-maids of fifteen, or to pine for the smiles or at the frowns of a prince of the blood, or to go mad at the refusal of a chamberlain's key. The last gratification he remembered to have enjoyed was that of riding bare-headed in a soaking rain for three hours by the side of his Grand Duke's mistress's coach; taking the *pas* of Count Krähwinkel, who challenged him, and was run through the body for this very dispute. Galgenstein gained a rheumatic gout by it, which put him to tortures for many months; and was further gratified with the post of English Envoy. He had a fortune, he asked no salary, and could look the envoy very well. Father O'Flaherty did all the duties, and furthermore acted as a spy over the ambassador — a sinecure post; for the man had no feelings, wishes, or opinions — absolutely none.

"Upon my life, father," said this worthy man, "I care for nothing. You have been talking for an hour about the Regent's death, and the Duchess of Phalaris, and sly old Fleury, and what not; and I care just as much as if you told me that one of my Bauers at Galgenstein had killed a pig; or as if my lackey, La Rose yonder, had made love to my mistress."

"He does!" said the reverend gentleman.

"Ah, Monsieur l'Abbé!" said La Rose, who was arranging his master's enormous court periwig, "you are, hélas! wrong. Monsieur le Comte will not be angry at my saying that I wish the accusation were true."

The count did not take the slightest notice of La Rose's wit, but continued his own complaints.

Digitized by Google

"I tell you, Abbé, I care for nothing. I lost a thousand guineas t'other night at basset; I wish to my heart I could have been vexed about it. Egad! I remember the day when to lose a hundred made me half mad for a month. Well, next day I had my revenge at dice, and threw thirteen mains. There was some delay; a call for fresh bones, I think; and would you believe it? I fell asleep with the box in my hand!"

"A desperate case, indeed," said the Abbé.

"If it had not been for Krähwinkel I should have been a dead man, that's positive. That pinking him saved me."

"I make no doubt of it," said the Abbé. "Had your Excellency not run him through, he, without a doubt, would have done the same for you."

"Psha! you mistake my words, Monsieur l'Abbé" (yawning). "I mean — what cursed chocolate! — that I was dying for want of excitement. Not that I care for dying; no, d—— me, if I do!"

"*When* you do, your Excellency means," said the Abbé, a fat, grey-haired Irishman, from the Irlandois College at Paris.

His Excellency did not laugh, nor understand jokes of any kind; he was of an undeviating stupidity, and only replied, "Sir, I mean what I say. I don't care for living: no, nor for dying either; but I can speak as well as another, and I 'll thank you not to be correcting my phrases as if I were one of your cursed schoolboys, and not a gentleman of fortune and blood."

Herewith the count, who had uttered four sentences about himself (he never spoke of anything else), sunk back on his pillows again, quite exhausted by his eloquence. The Abbé, who had a seat and a table by the bedside, resumed the labours which had brought him into the room in the morning, and busied himself with

Digitized by Google

papers, which occasionally he handed over to his superior for approval.

Presently Monsieur La Rose appeared.

"Here is a person with clothes from Mr. Beinkleider's. Will your Excellency see him, or shall I bid him leave the clothes?"

The Count was very much fatigued by this time; he had signed three papers, and read the first half-dozen lines of a pair of them.

"Bid the fellow come in, La Rose; and, hark ye, give me my wig: one must show one's self to be a gentleman before these scoundrels." And he therefore mounted a large chestnut-coloured, orange-scented pyramid of horse-hair, which was to awe the new-comer.

He was a lad of about seventeen, in a smart waistcoat and a blue riband: our friend Tom Billings, indeed. He carried under his arm the Count's destined breeches. He did not seem in the least awed, however, by his Excellency's appearance, but looked at him with a great degree of curiosity and boldness. In the same manner he surveyed the chaplain, and then nodded to him with a kind look of recognition.

"Where have I seen the lad?" said the father. "Oh, I have it! My good friend, you were at the hanging yesterday, I think?"

Mr. Billings gave a very significant nod with his head. "I never miss," said he.

"What a young Turk! And pray, sir, do you go for pleasure, or for business?"

"Business! what do you mean by business?"

"Oh, I did not know whether you might be brought up to the trade, or your relations be undergoing the operation."

"My relations," said Mr. Billings, proudly, and staring the Count full in the face, "was not made for no such

Digitized by Google

thing. I'm a tailor now, but I'm a gentleman's son: as good a man, ay, as his lordship there: for *you* a'n't his lordship — you're the Popish priest you are; and we were very near giving you a touch of a few Protestant stones, master."

The Count began to be a little amused; he was pleased to see the Abbé look alarmed, or even foolish.

"Egad, Abbé," said he, "you turn as white as a sheet."

"I don't fancy being murdered, my lord," said the Abbé, hastily; "and murdered for a good work. It was but to be useful to yonder poor Irishman, who saved me as a prisoner in Flanders, when Marlborough would have hung me up like poor Macshane himself was yesterday."

"Ah!" said the Count, bursting out with some energy, "I was thinking who the fellow could be, ever since he robbed me on the Heath. I recollect the scoundrel now: he was a second in a duel I had here in the year 6."

"Along with Major Wood, behind Montague House," said Mr. Billings. "*I've* heard on it." And here he looked more knowing than ever.

"*You!*" cried the Count, more and more surprised. "And pray who the devil *are* you?"

"My name 's Billings."

"Billings?" said the Count.

"I come out of Warwickshire." said Mr. Billings.

"Indeed!"

"I was born at Birmingham town."

"Were you, really!"

"My mother's name was Hall," continued Billings, in a solemn voice. "I was put out to nurse along with John Billings, a blacksmith; and my father run away. *Now* do you know who I am?"

"Why, upon honour, now," said the Count, who was

Digitized by Google

amused, — "upon honour, Mr. Billings, I have not that advantage."

"Well, then, my lord, *you 're my father!*"

Mr. Billings, when he said this, came forward to the Count with a theatrical air; and, flinging down the breeches of which he was the bearer, held out his arms and stared, having very little doubt but that his lordship would forthwith spring out of bed and hug him to his heart. A similar piece of *naïveté* many fathers of families have, I have no doubt, remarked in their children; who, not caring for their parents a single doit, conceive, nevertheless, that the latter are bound to show all sorts of affection for them. His lordship did move, but backwards towards the wall, and began pulling at the bell-rope with an expression of the most intense alarm.

"Keep back, sirrah! — keep back! Suppose I *am* your father, do you want to murder me? Good heavens, how the boy smells of gin and tobacco! Don't turn away, my lad! sit down there at a proper distance. And, La Rose, give him some eau-de-Cologne, and get a cup of coffee. Well, now, go on with your story. Egad, my dear Abbé, I think it is very likely that what the lad says is true."

"If it is a family conversation," said the Abbé, "I had better leave you."

"Oh, for heaven's sake, no! I could not stand the boy alone. Now, Mister ah! — What 's-your-name? Have the goodness to tell your story."

Mr. Billings was wofully disconcerted; for his mother and he had agreed that as soon as his father saw him he would be recognised at once, and, mayhap, made heir to the estates and title; in which, being disappointed, he very sulkily went on with his narrative, and detailed many of those events with which the reader has already been made acquainted. The Count asked the boy's

Digitized by Google

mother's Christian name, and being told it, his memory at once returned to him.

"What! are you little Cat's son?" said his Excellency. "By heavens, mon cher Abbé, a charming creature, but a tigress — positively a tigress. I recollect the whole affair now. She 's a little, fresh, black-haired woman a'n't she? with a sharp nose and thick eyebrows, ay? Ah! yes, yes," went on my lord, "I recollect her, I recollect her. It was at Birmingham I first met her; she was my Lady Trippet's woman, was n't she?"

"She was no such thing," said Mr. Billings, hotly. "Her aunt kept the 'Bugle Inn' on Waltham Green, and your lordship seduced her."

"Seduced her! Oh, 'gad, so I did. Stap me, now, I did. Yes, I made her jump on my black horse, and bore her off like — like Æneas bore away his wife from the siege of Rome! hey, l'Abbé?"

"The events were precisely similar," said the Abbé. "It is wonderful what a memory you have!"

"I was always remarkable for it," continued his Excellency. "Well, where was I, — at the black horse? Yes, at the black horse. Well, I mounted her on the black horse, and rode her *en croupe*, egad — ha, ha! — to Birmingham; and there we billed and cooed together like a pair of turtle-doves: yes — ha! — that we did!"

"And this, I suppose, is the end of some of the *billings?*" said the Abbé, pointing to Mr. Tom.

"Billings! what do you mean? Yes — oh — ah — a pun, a calembourg. Fi donc, M. l'Abbé." And then, after the wont of very stupid people, M. de Galgenstein went on to explain to the Abbe his own pun. "Well, but to proceed," cries he. "We lived together at Birmingham, and I was going to be married to a rich heiress, egad! when what do you think this little Cat does? She murders me, egad! and makes me *manquer* the

Digitized by Google

marriage. Twenty thousand, I think it was; and I wanted the money in those days. Now, was n't she an abominable monster, that mother of yours, hey, Mr. a — What 's-your-name?"

"She served you right!" said Mr. Billings, with a great oath, starting up out of all patience.

"Fellow!" said his Excellency, quite aghast, "do you know to whom you speak? — to a nobleman of seventy-eight descents; a count of the Holy Roman empire; a representative of a sovereign? Ha, egad! Don't stamp, fellow, if you hope for my protection."

"D—n your protection!" said Mr. Billings, in a fury. "Curse you and your protection too! I'm a free-born Briton, and no —— French Papist! And any man who insults my mother — ay, or calls me feller, had better look to himself and the two eyes in his head, I can tell him!" And with this Mr. Billings put himself into the most approved attitude of the Cockpit, and invited his father, the reverend gentleman, and M. La Rose the valet, to engage with him in a pugilistic encounter. The two latter, the Abbé especially, seemed dreadfully frightened; but the Count now looked on with much interest; and giving utterance to a feeble kind of chuckle, which lasted for about half a minute, said, —

"Paws off, Pompey! You young hang-dog, you — egad, yes, aha! 'pon honour, you 're a lad of spirit; some of your father's spunk in you, hey? I know him by that oath. Why, sir, when I was sixteen, I used to swear — to swear, egad, like a Thames waterman, and exactly in this fellow's way! Buss me, my lad; no, kiss my hand. That will do" — and he held out a very lean yellow hand, peering from a pair of yellow ruffles. It shook very much, and the shaking made all the rings upon it shine only the more.

Digitized by Google

"Well," says Mr. Billings, "if you was n't a-going to abuse me nor mother, I don't care if I shake hands with you. I ain't proud!"

The Abbé laughed with great glee; and that very evening sent off to his court a most ludicrous, *spicy* description of the whole scene of meeting between this amiable father and child; in which he said that young Billings was the *élève favourite* of M. Kitch, Ecuyer, le bourreau de Londres, and which made the Duke's mistress laugh so much that she vowed that the Abbé should have a bishopric on his return: for, with such store of wisdom, look you, my son, was the world governed in those days.

The Count and his offspring meanwhile conversed with some cordiality. The former informed the latter of all the diseases to which he was subject, his manner of curing them, his great consideration as chamberlain to the Duke of Bavaria; how he wore his court suits, and of a particular powder which he had invented for the hair; how, when he was seventeen, he had run away with a canoness, egad! who was afterwards locked up in a convent, and grew to be sixteen stone in weight; how he remembered the time when ladies did not wear patches; and how the Duchess of Marlborough boxed his ears when he was so high, because he wanted to kiss her.

All these important anecdotes took some time in the telling, and were accompanied by many profound moral remarks; such as, "I can't abide garlic, nor white-wine, stap me! nor Sauerkraut, though his Highness eats half a bushel per day. I ate it the first time at court; but when they brought it me a second time, I refused — refused, split me and grill me if I did n't! Everybody stared; his Highness looked as fierce as a Turk; and that infernal Krähwinkel (my dear, I did for him afterwards) — that cursed Krähwinkel, I say, looked as

Digitized by Google

pleased as possible, and whispered to Countess Fritsch, 'Blitzchen Frau Gräfinn,' says he, 'it's all over with Galgenstein.' What did I do? I had the *entrée*, and demanded it. 'Altesse,' says I, falling on one knee, 'I ate no Kraut at dinner to-day. You remarked it; I saw your Highness remark it.'

"'I did, M. le Comte,' said his Highness, gravely.

"I had almost tears in my eyes; but it was necessary to come to a resolution, you know. 'Sir,' said I, 'I speak with deep grief to your Highness, who are my benefactor, my friend, my father; but of this I am resolved, I WILL NEVER EAT SAUERKRAUT MORE: it don't agree with me. After being laid up for four weeks by the last dish of Sauerkraut of which I partook, I may say with confidence — *it don't* agree with me. By impairing my health, it impairs my intellect, and weakens my strength; and both I would keep for your Highness's service.'

"'Tut, tut!' said his Highness, 'Tut, tut, tut!' Those were his very words.

"'Give me my sword or my pen,' said I. 'Give me my sword or my pen, and with these Maximilian de Galgenstein is ready to serve you; but sure, — sure, a great prince will pity the weak health of a faithful subject, who does not know how to eat Sauerkraut?' His Highness was walking about the room: I was still on my knees, and stretched forward my hand to seize his coat.

"'GEHT ZUM TEUFEL, sir!' said he in a loud voice, (it means 'Go to the deuce,' my dear), — 'Geht zum Teufel, and eat what you like!' With this he went out of the room abruptly; leaving in my hand one of his buttons, which I keep to this day. As soon as I was alone, amazed by his great goodness and bounty, I sobbed aloud — cried like a child" (the Count's eyes

Digitized by Google

filled and winked at the very recollection), "and when I went back to the card-room, stepping up to Krähwinkel, 'Count,' says I, 'who looks foolish now?' — Hey there, La Rose, give me the diamond —— Yes, that was the very pun I made, and very good it was thought. 'Krähwinkel,' says I, '*who looks foolish now?*' and from that day to this I was never at a court-day asked to eat Sauerkraut —*never.*

"Hey there, La Rose! Bring me that diamond snuff-box in the drawer of my *secrétaire;*" and the snuff-box was brought. "Look at it, my dear," said the Count, "for I saw you seemed to doubt. There is the button — the very one that came off his grace's coat."

Mr. Billings received it, and twisted it about with a stupid air. The story had quite mystified him; for he did not dare yet to think his father was a fool — his respect for the aristocracy prevented him.

When the Count's communications had ceased, which they did as soon as the story of the Sauerkraut was finished, a silence of some minutes ensued. Mr. Billings was trying to comprehend the circumstances above narrated; his lordship was exhausted; the chaplain had quitted the room directly the word Sauerkraut was mentioned — he knew what was coming. His lordship looked for some time at his son; who returned the gaze with his mouth wide open. "Well," said the Count — "Well, sir? What are you sitting there for? If you have nothing to say, sir, you had better go. I had you here to amuse me — split me — and not to sit there staring!"

Mr. Billings rose in a fury.

"Hark ye, my lad," said the Count, "Tell La Rose to give thee five guineas, and, ah — come again some morning. A nice, well-grown young lad," mused the Count, as Master Tommy walked wondering out of

Digitized by Google

the apartment; "a pretty fellow enough, and intelligent too."

"Well, he *is* an odd fellow, my father," thought Mr. Billings, as he walked out, having received the sum offered to him. And he immediately went to call upon his friend Polly Briggs, from whom he had separated in the morning.

What was the result of their interview is not at all necessary to the progress of this history. Having made her, however, acquainted with the particulars of his visit to his father, he went to his mother's, and related to her all that had occurred.

Poor thing, she was very differently interested in the issue of it!

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER X

SHEWING HOW GALGENSTEIN AND MRS. CAT RECOGNISE EACH OTHER IN MARYLEBONE GARDENS — AND HOW THE COUNT DRIVES HER HOME IN HIS CARRIAGE

ABOUT a month after the touching conversation above related, there was given, at Marylebone Gardens, a grand concert and entertainment, at which the celebrated Madame Aménaïde, a dancer of the theatre at Paris, was to perform, under the patronage of several English and foreign noblemen; among whom was his Excellency the Bavarian Envoy. Madame Aménaïde was, in fact, no other than the *maîtresse en titre* of the Monsieur de Galgenstein, who had her a great bargain from the Duke de Rohan-Chabot at Paris.

It is not our purpose to make a great and learned display here, otherwise the costumes of the company assembled at this fête might afford scope for at least half-a-dozen pages of fine writing; and we might give, if need were, specimens of the very songs and music sung on the occasion. Does not the Burney collection of music, at the British Museum, afford one an ample store of songs from which to choose? Are there not the memoirs of Colley Cibber? those of Mrs. Clark, the daughter of Colley? Is there not Congreve, and Farquhar — nay, and at a pinch, the "Dramatic Biography," or even the *Spectator*, from which the observant genius might borrow passages, and construct pretty antiquarian figments?

Digitized by Google

Leave we these trifles to meaner souls! Our business is not with the breeches and periwigs, with the hoops and patches, but with the divine hearts of men, and the passions which agitate them. What need, therefore, have we to say that on this evening, after the dancing, the music, and the fireworks, Monsieur de Galgenstein felt the strange and welcome pangs of appetite, and was picking a cold chicken, along with some other friends, in an arbour — a cold chicken, with an accompaniment of a bottle of champagne — when he was led to remark that a very handsome, plump little person, in a gorgeous stiff damask gown and petticoat, was sauntering up and down the walk running opposite his supping-place, and bestowing continual glances towards his Excellency. The lady, whoever she was, was in a mask, such as ladies of high and low fashion wore at public places in those days, and had a male companion. He was a lad of only seventeen, marvellously well dressed — indeed, no other than the Count's own son, Mr. Thomas Billings; who had at length received from his mother the silver-hilted sword, and the wig, which that affectionate parent had promised to him.

In the course of the month which had elapsed since the interview that has been described in the former chapter, Mr. Billings had several times had occasion to wait on his father; but though he had, according to her wishes, frequently alluded to the existence of his mother, the Count had never at any time expressed the slightest wish to renew his acquaintance with that lady; who, if she had seen him, had only seen him by stealth.

The fact is, that after Billings had related to her the particulars of his first meeting with his Excellency; which ended, like many of the latter visits, in nothing at all; Mrs. Hayes had found some pressing business, which continually took her to Whitehall, and had been

Digitized by Google

prowling from day to day about Monsieur de Galgenstein's lodgings. Four or five times in the week, as his Excellency stepped into his coach, he might have remarked, had he chosen, a woman in a black hood, who was looking most eagerly into his eyes: but those eyes had long since left off the practice of observing; and Madam Catherine's visits had so far gone for nothing.

On this night, however, inspired by gaiety and drink, the Count had been amazingly stricken by the gait and ogling of the lady in the mask. The Reverend O'Flaherty, who was with him, and had observed the figure in the black cloak, recognised, or thought he recognised, her. "It is the woman who dogs your Excellency every day," said he. "She is with that tailor lad who loves to see people hanged — your Excellency's son, I mean." And he was just about to warn the Count of a conspiracy evidently made against him, and that the son had brought, most likely, the mother to play her arts upon him — he was just about, I say, to show to the Count the folly and danger of renewing an old *liaison* with a woman such as he had described Mrs. Cat to be, when his Excellency, starting up, and interrupting his ghostly adviser at the very beginning of his sentence, said, "Egad, l'Abbé, you are right — it *is* my son, and a mighty smart-looking creature with him. Hey! Mr. What 's-your-name — Tom, you rogue, don't you know your own father?" And so saying, and cocking his beaver on one side, Monsieur de Galgenstein strutted jauntily after Mr. Billings and the lady.

It was the first time that the Count had formally recognised his son.

"Tom, you rogue," stopped at this, and the Count came up. He had a white velvet suit, covered over with stars and orders, a neat modest wig and bag, and peach-

Digitized by Google

coloured silk-stockings with silver clasps. The lady in the mask gave a start as his Excellency came forward. "Law, mother, don't squeege so," said Tom. The poor woman was trembling in every limb; but she had presence of mind to "squeege" Tom a great deal harder; and the latter took the hint, I suppose, and was silent.

The splendid Count came up. Ye gods, how his embroidery glittered in the lamps! What a royal exhalation of musk and bergamot came from his wig, his handkerchief, and his grand lace ruffles and frills! A broad yellow riband passed across his breast, and ended at his hip in a shining diamond cross — a diamond cross, and a diamond sword-hilt! Was anything ever seen so beautiful? And might not a poor woman tremble when such a noble creature drew near to her, and deigned, from the height of his rank and splendour, to look down upon her? As Jove came down to Semele in state, in his habits of ceremony, with all the grand cordons of his orders blazing about his imperial person — thus dazzling, magnificent, triumphant, the great Galgenstein descended towards Mrs. Catherine. Her cheeks glowed red hot under her coy velvet mask, her heart thumped against the whalebone prison of her stays. What a delicious storm of vanity was raging in her bosom! What a rush of long-pent recollections burst forth at the sound of that enchanting voice!

As you wind up a hundred-guinea chronometer with a twopenny watch-key — as by means of a dirty wooden plug you set all the waters of Versailles a-raging, and splashing, and storming — in like manner, and by like humble agents, were Mrs. Catherine's tumultuous passions set going. The Count, we have said, slipped up to his son, and merely saying, "How do, Tom?" cut the young gentleman altogether, and passing round to the

Digitized by Google

lady's side, said, "Madam, 'tis a charming evening — egad it is!" She almost fainted: it was the old voice. There he was, after seventeen years, once more at her side!

Now I know what I could have done. I can turn out a quotation from Sophocles (by looking to the index) as well as another: I can throw off a bit of fine writing too, with passion, similes, and a moral at the end. What, pray, is the last sentence but one but the very finest writing? Suppose, for example, I had made Maximilian, as he stood by the side of Catherine, look up towards the clouds, and exclaim, in the words of the voluptuous Cornelius Nepos,

> Αἰέναοι νεφέλαι
> Ἀρθῶμεν φανεραὶ
> Δροσερὰν φύσιν εὐάγητοι, κ.τ.λ.

Or suppose, again, I had said, in a style still more popular: — The Count advanced towards the maiden. They both were mute for a while; and only the beating of her heart interrupted that thrilling and passionate silence. Ah, what years of buried joys and fears, hopes and disappointments, arose from their graves in the far past, and in those brief moments flitted before the united ones! How sad was that delicious retrospect, and oh, how sweet! The tears that rolled down the cheek of each were bubbles from the choked and moss-grown wells of youth; the sigh that heaved each bosom had some lurking odours in it — memories of the fragrance of boyhood, echoes of the hymns of the young heart! Thus is it ever — for these blessed recollections the soul always has a place; and while crime perishes, and sorrow is forgotten, the beautiful alone is eternal.

"O golden legends, written in the skies!" mused De Galgenstein, "ye shine as ye did in the olden days! *We*

Digitized by Google

change, but *ye* speak ever the same language. Gazing in your abysmal depths, the feeble ratioci——"

. . . . . .

. . . . . .

There, now, are six columns[1] of the best writing to be found in this or any other book. Galgenstein has quoted Euripides thrice, Plato once, Lycophron nine times, besides extracts from the Latin syntax and the minor Greek poets. Catherine's passionate embreathings are of the most fashionable order; and I call upon the ingenious critic of the X—— newspaper to say whether they do not possess the real impress of the giants of the olden time — the real Platonic smack, in a word? Not that I want in the least to show off; but it is as well, every now and then, to show the public what one *can* do.

Instead, however, of all this rant and nonsense, how much finer is the speech that the Count really did make? "It is a very fine evening, — egad it is!" The "egad" did the whole business: Mrs. Cat was as much in love with him now as ever she had been; and, gathering up all her energies, she said, "It is dreadful hot too, I think;" and with this she made a curtsey.

"Stifling, split me!" added his Excellency. "What do you say, madam, to a rest in an arbour, and a drink of something cool?"

"Sir!" said the lady, drawing back.

"Oh, a drink — a drink by all means," exclaimed Mr. Billings, who was troubled with a perpetual thirst.

[1] There *were* six columns, as mentioned by the accurate Mr. Solomons; but we have withdrawn two pages and three-quarters, because, although our correspondent has been excessively eloquent, according to custom, we were anxious to come to the facts of the story.

Mr. Solomons, by sending to our office, may have the cancelled passages. — O. Y.

Digitized by Google

"Come, mo——, Mrs. Jones, I mean: you 're fond of a glass of cold punch, you know; and the rum here is prime, I can tell you."

The lady in the mask consented with some difficulty to the proposal of Mr. Billings, and was led by the two gentlemen into an arbour, where she was seated between them; and some wax-candles being lighted, punch was brought.

She drank one or two glasses very eagerly, and so did her two companions; although it was evident to see, from the flushed looks of both of them, that they had little need of any such stimulus. The Count, in the midst of his champagne, it must be said, had been amazingly stricken and scandalised by the appearance of such a youth as Billings in a public place, with a lady under his arm. He was, the reader will therefore understand, in the moral stage of liquor; and when he issued out, it was not merely with the intention of examining Mr Billings's female companion, but of administering to him some sound correction for venturing, at his early period of life, to form any such acquaintances. On joining Billings, his Excellency's first step was naturally to examine the lady. After they had been sitting for a while over their punch, he bethought him of his original purpose, and began to address a number of moral remarks to his son.

We have already given some specimens of Monsieur de Galgenstein's sober conversation; and it is hardly necessary to trouble the reader with any further reports of his speeches. They were intolerably stupid and dull; as egotistical as his morning lecture had been, and a hundred times more rambling and prosy. If Cat had been in the possession of her sober senses, she would have seen in five minutes that her ancient lover was a ninny, and have left him with scorn; but

Digitized by Google

she was under the charm of old recollections, and the sound of that silly voice was to her magical. As for Mr. Billings, he allowed his Excellency to continue his prattle; only frowning, yawning, cursing occasionally, but drinking continually.

So the Count descanted at length upon the enormity of young Billings's early *liaisons;* and then he told his own, in the year four, with a burgomaster's daughter at Ratisbon, when he was in the Elector of Bavaria's service — then, after Blenheim, when he had come over to the Duke of Marlborough, when a physician's wife at Bonn poisoned herself for him, &c. &c.; of a piece with the story of the canoness, which has been recorded before. All the tales were true. A clever, ugly man every now and then is successful with the ladies; but a handsome fool is irresistible. Mrs. Cat listened and listened. Good heavens! she had heard all these tales before, and recollected the place and the time — how she was hemming a handkerchief for Max; who came round and kissed her, vowing that the physician's wife was nothing compared to her — how he was tired, and lying on the sofa, just come home from shooting. How handsome he looked! Cat thought he was only the handsomer now; and looked more grave and thoughtful, the dear fellow!

The garden was filled with a vast deal of company of all kinds, and parties were passing every moment before the arbour where our trio sat. About half-an-hour after his Excellency had quitted his own box and party, the Rev. Mr. O'Flaherty came discreetly round, to examine the proceedings of his diplomatical *chef.* The lady in the mask was listening with all her might; Mr. Billings was drawing figures on the table with punch; and the Count talking incessantly. The Father Confessor listened for a moment; and then, with something resem-

Digitized by Google

bling an oath, walked away to the entry of the gardens, where his Excellency's gilt coach, with three footmen, was waiting to carry him back to London. "Get me a chair, Joseph," said his Reverence, who infinitely preferred a seat gratis in the coach. "That fool," muttered he, "will not move for this hour." The reverend gentlemen knew that, when the Count was on the subject of the physician's wife, his discourses were intolerably long; and took upon himself, therefore, to disappear, along with the rest of the Count's party; who procured other conveyances, and returned to their homes.

After this quiet shadow had passed before the Count's box, many groups of persons passed and repassed; and among them was no other than Mrs. Polly Briggs, to whom we have been already introduced. Mrs. Polly was in company with one or two other ladies, and leaning on the arm of a gentleman with large shoulders and calves, a fierce cock to his hat, and a shabby genteel air. His name was Mr. Moffat, and his present occupation was that of door-keeper at a gambling-house in Covent Garden; where, though he saw many thousands pass daily under his eyes, his own salary amounted to no more than four-and-sixpence weekly, — a sum quite insufficient to maintain him in the rank which he held.

Mr. Moffat had, however, received some funds — amounting, indeed, to a matter of twelve guineas — within the last month, and was treating Mrs. Briggs very generously to the concert. It may be as well to say that every one of the twelve guineas had come out of Mrs. Polly's own pocket; who, in return, had received them from Mr. Billings. And as the reader may remember that, on the day of Tommy's first interview with his father, he had previously paid a visit to Mrs. Briggs, having under his arm a pair of breeches, which Mrs. Briggs coveted — he should now

Digitized by Google

be informed that she desired these breeches, not for pincushions but for Mr. Moffat, who had long been in want of a pair.

Having thus episodically narrated Mr. Moffat's history, let us state that he, his lady, and their friends, passed before the Count's arbour, joining in a melodious chorus to a song which one of the society, an actor of Betterton's, was singing: —

"'T is my will, when I 'm dead, that no tear shall be shed,
No 'Hic jacet' be graved on my stone;
But pour o'er my ashes a bottle of red,
And say a good fellow is gone,
My brave boys!
And say a good fellow is gone."

"My brave boys" was given with vast emphasis by the party; Mr. Moffat growling it in a rich bass, and Mrs. Briggs in a soaring treble. As to the notes, when quavering up to the skies, they excited various emotions among the people in the gardens. "Silence them blackguards!" shouted a barber, who was taking a pint of small beer along with his lady. "Stop that there infernal screeching!" said a couple of ladies, who were sipping ratafia in company with two pretty fellows.

"Dang it, it 's Polly!" said Mr. Tom Billings, bolting out of the box, and rushing towards the sweet-voiced Mrs. Briggs. When he reached her, which he did quickly, and made his arrival known by tipping Mrs. Briggs slightly on the waist, and suddenly bouncing down before her and her friend, both of the latter drew back somewhat startled.

"Law, Mr. Billings!" says Mrs. Polly, rather coolly, "is it you? Who thought of seeing you here?"

"Who 's this here young feller?" says towering Mr. Moffat, with his bass voice.

Digitized by Google

"It's Mr. Billings, cousin, a friend of mine," said Mrs. Polly, beseechingly.

"Oh, cousin, if it's a friend of yours, he should know better how to conduct himself, that's all. Har you a dancing-master, young feller, that you cut them there capers before gentlemen?" growled Mr. Moffat; who hated Mr. Billings, for the excellent reason that he lived upon him.

"Dancing-master be hanged!" said Mr. Billings, with becoming spirit: "if you call me dancing-master, I'll pull your nose."

"What!" roared Mr. Moffat, "pull my nose? *My nose!* I'll tell you what, my lad, if you durst move me, I'll cut your throat, curse me!"

"Oh, Moffy — cousin, I mean — 't is a shame to treat the poor boy so. Go away, Tommy; do go away; my cousin's in liquor," whimpered Madam Briggs, who really thought that the great door-keeper would put his threat into execution.

"Tommy!" said Mr. Moffat, frowning horribly; "Tommy to me too? Dog, get out of my sss——" *sight* was the word which Mr. Moffat intended to utter; but he was interrupted; for, to the astonishment of his friends and himself, Mr. Billings did actually make a spring at the monster's nose, and caught it so firmly, that the latter could not finish his sentence.

The operation was performed with amazing celerity; and, having concluded it, Mr. Billings sprung back, and whisked from out its sheath that new silver-hilted sword which his mamma had given him. "Now," said he, with a fierce kind of calmness, "now for the throat-cutting, cousin: I'm your man!"

How the brawl might have ended, no one can say, had the two gentlemen actually crossed swords; but Mrs. Polly, with a wonderful presence of mind, restored

Digitized by Google

peace by exclaiming, "Hush, hush! the beaks, the beaks!" Upon which, with one common instinct, the whole party made a rush for the garden gates, and disappeared into the fields. Mrs. Briggs knew her company: there was something in the very name of a constable which sent them all a-flying.

After running a reasonable time, Mr. Billings stopped. But the great Moffat was nowhere to be seen, and Polly Briggs had likewise vanished. Then Tom bethought him that he would go back to his mother; but, arriving at the gate of the gardens, was refused admittance, as he had not a shilling in his pocket. "I've left," says Tommy, giving himself the airs of a gentleman, "some friends in the gardens. I'm with his Excellency the Bavarian henvy."

"Then you had better go away with him," said the gate people.

"But I tell you I left him there, in the grand circle, with a lady; and, what's more, in the dark walk, I have left a silver-hilted sword."

"Oh, my lord, I'll go and tell him then," cried one of the porters, "if you will wait."

Mr. Billings seated himself on a post near the gate, and there consented to remain until the return of his messenger. The latter went straight to the dark walk, and found the sword, sure enough. But, instead of returning it to its owner, this discourteous knight broke the trenchant blade at the hilt; and flinging the steel away, pocketed the baser silver metal, and lurked off by the private door consecrated to the waiters and fiddlers.

In the meantime, Mr. Billings waited and waited. And what was the conversation of his worthy parents inside the garden? I cannot say; but one of the waiters declared that he had served the great foreign Count with two bowls of rack-punch, and some biscuits, in

Digitized by Google

No. 3: that in the box with him were first a young gentleman, who went away, and a lady, splendidly dressed and masked: that when the lady and his lordship were alone, she edged away to the further end of the table, and they had much talk: that at last, when his Grace had pressed her very much, she took off her mask and said, "Don't you know me now, Max?" that he cried out, "My own Catherine, thou art more beautiful than ever!" and wanted to kneel down and vow eternal love to her; but she begged him not to do so in a place where all the world would see: that then his Highness paid, and they left the gardens, the lady putting on her mask again.

When they issued from the gardens, "Ho! Joseph La Rose, my coach!" shouted his Excellency, in rather a husky voice; and the men who had been waiting came up with the carriage. A young gentleman, who was dozing on one of the posts at the entry, woke up suddenly at the blaze of the torches and the noise of the footmen. The Count gave his arm to the lady in the mask, who slipped in; and he was whispering La Rose, when the lad who had been sleeping hit his Excellency on the shoulder, and said, "I say, Count, you can give *me* a cast home too," and jumped into the coach.

When Catherine saw her son, she threw herself into his arms, and kissed him with a burst of hysterical tears; of which Mr. Billings was at a loss to understand the meaning. The Count joined them, looking not a little disconcerted; and the pair were landed at their own door, where stood Mr. Hayes, in his night-cap, ready to receive them, and astounded at the splendour of the equipage in which his wife returned to him.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XI

OF SOME DOMESTIC QUARRELS, AND THE CONSEQUENCE THEREOF

AN ingenious magazine-writer, who lived in the time of Mr. Brock and the Duke of Marlborough, compared the latter gentleman's conduct in battle, when he

> "In peaceful thought the field of death surveyed,
> To fainting squadrons lent the timely aid;
> Inspired repulsed battalions to engage,
> And taught the doubtful battle where to rage" ——

Mr. Joseph Addison, I say, compared the Duke of Marlborough to an angel, who is sent by Divine command to chastise a guilty people —

> "And pleased his Master's orders to perform,
> Rides on the whirlwind, and directs the storm."

The four first of these novel lines touch off the Duke's disposition and genius to a tittle. He had a love for such scenes of strife: in the midst of them his spirit rose calm and supreme, soaring (like an angel or not, but anyway the compliment is a very pretty one) on the battle-clouds majestic, and causing to ebb or to flow the mighty tide of war.

But as this famous simile might apply with equal propriety to a bad angel as to a good one, it may in like manner be employed to illustrate small quarrels as well as great — a little family squabble, in which two or three people are engaged, as well as a vast national

Digitized by Google

dispute, argued on each side by the roaring throats of five hundred angry cannon. The poet means, in fact, that the Duke of Marlborough had an immense genius for mischief.

Our friend Brock, or Wood (whose actions we love to illustrate by the very handsomest similes), possessed this genius in common with his Grace; and was never so happy, or seen to so much advantage, as when he was employed in setting people by the ears. His spirits, usually dull, then rose into the utmost gaiety and good-humour. When the doubtful battle flagged, he by his art would instantly restore it. When, for instance, Tom's repulsed battalions of rhetoric fled from his mamma's fire, a few words of apt sneer or encouragement on Wood's part would bring the fight round again; or when Mr. Hayes's fainting squadrons of abuse broke upon the stubborn squares of Tom's bristling obstinacy, it was Wood's delight to rally the former, and bring him once more to the charge. A great share had this man in making those bad people worse. Many fierce words and bad passions, many falsehoods and knaveries on Tom's part, much bitterness, scorn, and jealousy on the part of Hayes and Catherine, might be attributed to this hoary old tempter, whose joy and occupation it was to raise and direct the domestic storms and whirlwinds of the family of which he was a member. And do not let us be accused of an undue propensity to use sounding words, because we compare three scoundrels in the Tyburn Road to so many armies, and Mr. Wood to a mighty field-marshal. My dear sir, when you have well studied the world — how supremely great the meanest thing in this world is, and how infinitely mean the greatest — I am mistaken if you do not make a strange and proper jumble of the sublime and the ridiculous, the lofty and the low. I have looked at

Digitized by Google

the world, for my part, and come to the conclusion that I know not which is which.

Well, then, on the night when Mrs. Hayes, as recorded by us, had been to the Marylebone Gardens, Mr. Wood had found the sincerest enjoyment in plying her husband with drink; so that, when Catherine arrived at home, Mr. Hayes came forward to meet her in a manner which showed that he was not only surly but drunk. Tom stepped out of the coach first; and Hayes asked him, with an oath, where he had been? The oath Mr. Billings sternly flung back again (with another in its company), and at the same time refused to give his stepfather any sort of answer to his query.

"The old man is drunk, mother," said he to Mrs. Hayes, as he handed that lady out of the coach (before leaving which she had to withdraw her hand rather violently from the grasp of the Count, who was inside). Hayes instantly showed the correctness of his surmise by slamming the door courageously in Tom's face, when he attempted to enter the house with his mother. And when Mrs. Catherine remonstrated, according to her wont, in a very angry and supercilious tone, Mr. Hayes replied with equal haughtiness, and a regular quarrel ensued.

People were accustomed in those days to use much more simple and expressive terms of language than are now thought polite; and it would be dangerous to give, in this present year 1840, the exact words of reproach which passed between Hayes and his wife in 1726. Mr. Wood sat near, laughing his sides out. Mr. Hayes swore that his wife should not go abroad to tea-gardens in search of vile Popish noblemen; to which Mrs. Hayes replied, that Mr. Hayes was a pitiful, lying, sneaking cur, and that she would go where she pleased. Mr. Hayes rejoined, that if she said much more he would

Digitized by Google

take a stick to her. Mr. Wood whispered, "And serve her right." Mrs. Hayes thereupon swore she had stood his cowardly blows once or twice before, but that if ever he did so again, as sure as she was born, she would stab him. Mr. Wood said, "Curse me, but I like her spirit."

Mr. Hayes took another line of argument, and said, "The neighbours would talk, madam."

"Ay, that they will, no doubt," said Mr. Wood.

"Then let them," said Catherine. "What do we care about the neighbours? Did n't the neighbours talk when you sent Widow Wilkins to gaol? Did n't the neighbours talk when you levied on poor old Thomson? You did n't mind *then*, Mr. Hayes."

"Business, ma'am, is business; and if I did distrain on Thomson, and lock up Wilkins, I think you knew about it as much as I."

"I' faith, I believe you 're a pair," said Mr. Wood.

"Pray, sir, keep your tongue to yourself. Your opinion is n't asked anyhow — no, nor your company wanted neither," cried Mrs. Catherine, with proper spirit.

At which remark Mr. Wood only whistled.

"I have asked this here gentleman to pass this evening along with me. We 've been drinking together, ma'am."

"That we have," said Mr. Wood, looking at Mrs. Cat with the most perfect good-humour.

"I say, ma'am, that we 've been a-drinking together; and when we 've been a-drinking together, I say that a man is my friend. Dr. Wood is my friend, madam — the Rev. Dr. Wood. We 've passed the evening in company, talking about politics, madam — politics and riddle-iddle-igion. We 've not been flaunting in tea-gardens, and ogling the men."

"It 's a lie!" shrieked Mrs. Hayes. "I went with

Digitized by Google

Tom — you know I did: the boy would n't let me rest till I promised to go."

"Hang him, I hate him," said Mr. Hayes: "he 's always in my way."

"He 's the only friend I have in the world, and the only being I care a pin for," said Catherine.

"He 's an impudent, idle, good-for-nothing scoundrel, and I hope to see him hanged!" shouted Mr. Hayes. "And pray, madam, whose carriage was that as you came home in? I warrant you paid something for the ride — Ha, ha!"

"Another lie!" screamed Cat, and clutched hold of a supper-knife. "Say it again, John Hayes, and by ——, I'll do for you."

"Do for me? Hang me," said Mr. Hayes, flourishing a stick, and perfectly pot-valiant, "do you think I care for a bastard and a ——?"

He did not finish the sentence, for the woman ran at him like a savage, knife in hand. He bounded back, flinging his arms about wildly, and struck her with his staff sharply across the forehead. The woman went down instantly. A lucky blow was it for Hayes and her: it saved him from death, perhaps, and her from murder.

All this scene — a very important one of our drama — might have been described at much greater length; but, in truth, the author has a natural horror of dwelling too long upon such hideous spectacles: nor would the reader be much edified by a full and accurate knowledge of what took place. The quarrel, however, though not more violent than many that had previously taken place between Hayes and his wife, was about to cause vast changes in the condition of this unhappy pair.

Hayes was at the first moment of his victory very much alarmed; he feared that he had killed the woman;

Digitized by Google

and Wood started up rather anxiously too, with the same fancy. But she soon began to recover. Water was brought; her head was raised and bound up; and in a short time Mrs. Catherine gave vent to a copious fit of tears, which relieved her somewhat. These did not affect Hayes much — they rather pleased him, for he saw he had got the better; and although Cat fiercely turned upon him when he made some small attempt towards reconciliation, he did not heed her anger, but smiled and winked in a self-satisfied way at Wood. The coward was quite proud of his victory; and finding Catherine asleep, or apparently so, when he followed her to bed, speedily gave himself up to slumber too, and had some pleasant dreams to his portion.

Mr. Wood also went sniggering and happy upstairs to his chamber. The quarrel had been a real treat to him; it excited the old man — tickled him into good-humour; and he promised himself a rare continuation of the fun when Tom should be made acquainted with the circumstances of the dispute. As for his Excellency the Count, the ride from Marylebone Gardens, and a tender squeeze of the hand which Catherine permitted to him on parting, had so inflamed the passions of the nobleman, that after sleeping for nine hours, and taking his chocolate as usual the next morning, he actually delayed to read the newspaper, and kept waiting a toy-shop lady from Cornhill (with the sweetest bargain of mechlin lace), in order to discourse to his chaplain on the charms of Mrs. Hayes.

She, poor thing, never closed her lids, except when she would have had Mr. Hayes imagine that she slumbered; but lay beside him, tossing and tumbling, with hot eyes wide open, and heart thumping, and pulse of a hundred and ten, and heard the heavy hours tolling; and at last the day came peering, haggard, through

Digitized by Google

the window-curtains, and found her still wakeful and wretched.

Mrs. Hayes had never been, as we have seen, especially fond of her lord; but now, as the day made visible to her the sleeping figure and countenance of that gentleman, she looked at him with a contempt and loathing such as she had never felt even in all the years of her wedded life. Mr. Hayes was snoring profoundly: by his bedside, on his ledger, stood a large greasy tin candlestick, containing a lank tallow-candle, turned down in the shaft; and in the lower part, his keys, purse, and tobacco-pipe; his feet were huddled up in his greasy threadbare clothes; his head and half his sallow face muffled up in a red woollen nightcap; his beard was of several days' growth; his mouth was wide open, and he was snoring profoundly: on a more despicable little creature the sun never shone. And to this sordid wretch was Catherine united for ever. What a pretty rascal history might be read in yonder greasy day-book, which never left the miser! — he never read in any other. Of what a treasure were yonder keys and purse the keepers! not a shilling they guarded but was picked from the pocket of necessity, plundered from needy wantonness, or pitilessly squeezed from starvation. "A fool, a miser, and a coward! Why was I bound to this wretch?" thought Catherine: "I, who am high-spirited and beautiful (did not *he* tell me so?); I who, born a beggar, have raised myself to competence, and might have mounted — who knows whither? — if cursed Fortune had not baulked me!"

As Mrs. Cat did not utter these sentiments, but only thought them, we have a right to clothe her thoughts in the genteelest possible language; and, to the best of our power, have done so. If the reader examines Mrs. Hayes's train of reasoning, he will not, we should think,

Digitized by Google

fail to see how ingeniously she managed to fix all the wrong upon her husband, and yet to twist out some consolatory arguments for her own vanity. This perverse argumentation we have all of us, no doubt, employed in our time. How often have we,—we poets, politicians, philosophers, family-men, — found charming excuses for our own rascalities in the monstrous wickedness of the world about us; how loudly have we abused the times and our neighbours! All this devil's logic did Mrs. Catherine, lying wakeful in her bed on the night of the Marylebone fête, exert in gloomy triumph.

It must, however, be confessed, that nothing could be more just than Mrs. Hayes's sense of her husband's scoundrelism and meanness; for if we have not proved these in the course of this history, we have proved nothing. Mrs. Cat had a shrewd, observing mind; and if she wanted for proofs against Hayes, she had but to look before and about her to find them. This amiable pair were lying in a large walnut-bed, with faded silk furniture, which had been taken from under a respectable old invalid widow, who had become security for a prodigal son; the room was hung round with an antique tapestry (representing Rebecca at the Well, Bathsheba Bathing, Judith and Holofernes, and other subjects from Holy Writ), which had been many score times sold for fifty pounds, and bought back by Mr. Hayes for two, in those accommodating bargains which he made with young gentlemen, who received fifty pounds of money and fifty of tapestry in consideration of their hundred-pound bills. Against this tapestry, and just cutting off Holofernes's head, stood an enormous ominous black clock, the spoil of some other usurious transaction. Some chairs, and a dismal old black cabinet, completed the furniture of this apartment: it wanted but a ghost to render its gloom complete.

Digitized by Google

Mrs. Hayes sat up in the bed sternly regarding her husband. There is, be sure, a strong magnetic influence in wakeful eyes so examining a sleeping person (do not you, as a boy, remember waking of bright summer mornings and finding your mother looking over you? had not the gaze of her tender eyes stolen into your senses long before you woke, and cast over your slumbering spirit a sweet spell of peace, and love, and fresh-springing joy?) Some such influence had Catherine's looks upon her husband: for, as he slept under them, the man began to writhe about uneasily, and to burrow his head in the pillow, and to utter quick, strange moans and cries, such as have often jarred one's ear while watching at the bed of the feverish sleeper. It was just upon six, and presently the clock began to utter those dismal grinding sounds, which issue from clocks at such periods, and which sound like the death-rattle of the departing hour. Then the bell struck the knell of it; and with this Mr. Hayes awoke, and looked up, and saw Catherine gazing at him.

Their eyes met for an instant, and Catherine turned away, burning red, and looking as if she had been caught in the commission of a crime.

A kind of blank terror seized upon old Hayes's soul: a horrible icy fear, and presentiment of coming evil; and yet the woman had but looked at him. He thought rapidly over the occurrences of the last night, the quarrel, and the end of it. He had often struck her before when angry, and heaped all kinds of bitter words upon her; but, in the morning, she bore no malice, and the previous quarrel was forgotten, or, at least, passed over. Why should the last night's dispute not have the same end? Hayes calculated all this, and tried to smile.

"I hope we're friends, Cat?" said he. "You know I was in liquor last night, and sadly put out by the loss

Digitized by Google

of that fifty pound. They 'll ruin me, dear — I know they will."

Mrs. Hayes did not answer.

"I should like to see the country again, dear," said he, in his most wheedling way. "I 've a mind, do you know, to call in all our money? It 's you who 've made every farthing of it, that 's sure; and it 's a matter of two thousand pound by this time. Suppose we go into Warwickshire, Cat, and buy a farm, and live genteel. Should n't you like to live a lady in your own county again? How they 'd stare at Birmingham! hey, Cat?"

And with this Mr. Hayes made a motion, as if he would seize his wife's hand, but she flung his back again.

"Coward!" said she, "you want liquor to give you courage, and then you 've only heart enough to strike women."

"It was only in self-defence, my dear," said Hayes, whose courage was all gone. "You tried, you know, to — to ——"

"To *stab* you; and I wish I had!" said Mrs. Hayes, setting her teeth, and glaring at him like a demon; and so saying she sprung out of bed. There was a great stain of blood on her pillow. "Look at it," said she. "That 's blood of your shedding!" and at this Hayes fairly began to weep, so utterly downcast and frightened was the miserable man. The wretch's tears only inspired his wife with a still greater rage and loathing; she cared not so much for the blow, but she hated the man: the man to whom she was tied for ever — for ever! The bar between her and wealth, happiness, love, rank perhaps. "If I were free," thought Mrs. Hayes (the thought had been sitting at her pillow all night, and whispering ceaselessly into her ear) — "if I were

Digitized by Google

free, Max would marry me; I know he would: — he said so yesterday!"

. . . . . .

As if by a kind of intuition, old Wood seemed to read all this woman's thoughts; for he said that day with a sneer, that he would wager she was thinking how much better it would be to be a Count's lady than a poor miser's wife. "And faith," said he, "a Count and a chariot-and-six is better than an old skinflint with a cudgel." And then he asked her if her head was better, and supposed that she was used to beating; and cut sundry other jokes, which made the poor wretch's wounds of mind and body feel a thousand times sorer.

Tom, too, was made acquainted with the dispute, and swore his accustomed vengeance against his stepfather. Such feelings, Wood, with a dexterous malice, would never let rest; it was his joy, at first quite a disinterested one, to goad Catherine and to frighten Hayes: though, in truth, that unfortunate creature had no occasion for incitements from without to keep up the dreadful state of terror and depression into which he had fallen.

For, from the morning after the quarrel, the horrible words and looks of Catherine never left Hayes's memory; but a cold fear followed him — a dreadful prescience. He strove to overcome this fate as a coward would — to kneel to it for compassion — to coax and wheedle it into forgiveness. He was slavishly gentle to Catherine, and bore her fierce taunts with mean resignation. He trembled before young Billings, who was now established in the house (his mother said, to protect her against the violence of her husband), and suffered his brutal language and conduct without venturing to resist.

The young man and his mother lorded over the house: Hayes hardly dared to speak in their presence;

Digitized by Google

seldom sat with the family except at meals; but slipped away to his chamber (he slept apart now from his wife) or passed the evening at the public-house, where he was constrained to drink — to spend some of his beloved sixpences for drink!

And, of course, the neighbours began to say, "John Hayes neglects his wife." "He tyrannises over her, and beats her." "Always at the public-house, leaving an honest woman alone at home!"

The unfortunate wretch did *not* hate his wife. He was used to her — fond of her as much as he could be fond — sighed to be friends with her again — repeatedly would creep, whimpering, to Wood's room, when the latter was alone, and beg him to bring about a reconciliation. They *were* reconciled, as much as ever they could be. The woman looked at him, thought what she might be but for him, and scorned and loathed him with a feeling that almost amounted to insanity. What nights she lay awake, weeping and cursing herself and him! His humility and beseeching looks only made him more despicable and hateful to her.

If Hayes did not hate the mother, however, he hated the boy — hated and feared him dreadfully. He would have poisoned him if he had had the courage; but he dared not: he dared not even look at him as he sat there, the master of the house, in insolent triumph. O God! how the lad's brutal laughter rung in Hayes's ears; and how the stare of his fierce, bold black eyes pursued him! Of a truth, if Mr. Wood loved mischief, as he did, honestly and purely for mischief's sake, he had enough here. There was mean malice, and fierce scorn, and black revenge, and sinful desire, boiling up in the hearts of these wretched people, enough to content Mr. Wood's great master himself.

Hayes's business, as we have said, was nominally that

Digitized by Google

of a carpenter; but since, for the last few years, he had added to it that of a lender of money, the carpenter's trade had been neglected altogether for one so much more profitable. Mrs. Hayes had exerted herself, with much benefit to her husband, in his usurious business. She was a resolute, clear-sighted, keen woman, that did not love money, but loved to be rich and push her way in the world. She would have nothing to do with the trade now, however, and told her husband to manage it himself. She felt that she was separated from him for ever, and could no more be brought to consider her interests as connected with his own.

The man was well fitted for the creeping and niggling of his dastardly trade; and gathered his moneys, and busied himself with his lawyer, and acted as his own book-keeper and clerk, not without satisfaction. His wife's speculations, when they worked in concert, used often to frighten him. He never sent out his capital without a pang, and only because he dared not question her superior judgment and will. He began now to lend no more: he could not let the money out of his sight. His sole pleasure was to creep up into his room, and count and recount it. When Billings came into the house, Hayes had taken a room next to that of Wood. It was a protection to him; for Wood would often rebuke the lad for using Hayes ill: and both Catherine and Tom treated the old man with deference.

At last — it was after he had collected a good deal of his money — Hayes began to reason with himself, "Why should I stay? — stay to be insulted by that boy, or murdered by him? He is ready for any crime." He determined to fly. He would send Catherine money every year. no — she had the furniture; let her let lodgings — that would support her. He would go, and live away, abroad in some cheap place — away from that

Digitized by Google

boy and his horrible threats. The idea of freedom was agreeable to the poor wretch; and he began to wind up his affairs as quickly as he could.

Hayes would now allow no one to make his bed or enter his room; and Wood could hear him through the panels fidgeting perpetually to and fro, opening and shutting of chests, and clinking of coin. At the least sound he would start up, and would go to Billings's door and listen. Wood used to hear him creeping through the passages, and returning stealthily to his own chamber.

One day the woman and her son had been angrily taunting him in the presence of a neighbour. The neighbour retired soon; and Hayes, who had gone with him to the door, heard, on returning, the voice of Wood in the parlour. The old man laughed in his usual saturnine way, and said, "Have a care, Mrs. Cat; for if Hayes were to die suddenly, by the laws, the neighbours would accuse thee of his death."

Hayes started as if he had been shot. "He too is in the plot," thought he. "They are all leagued against me: they *will* kill me: they are only biding their time." Fear seized him, and he thought of flying that instant and leaving all; and he stole into his room and gathered his money together. But only a half of it was there: in a few weeks all would have come in. He had not the heart to go. But that night Wood heard Hayes pause at *his* door, before he went to listen at Mrs. Catherine's. "What is the man thinking of?" said Wood. "He is gathering his money together. Has he a hoard yonder unknown to us all?"

Wood thought he would watch him. There was a closet between the two rooms: Wood bored a hole in the panel, and peeped through. Hayes had a brace of pistols, and four or five little bags before him on the

Digitized by Google

table. One of these he opened, and placed, one by one, five-and-twenty guineas into it. Such a sum had been due that day — Catherine spoke of it only in the morning; for the debtor's name had by chance been mentioned in the conversation. Hayes commonly kept but a few guineas in the house. For what was he amassing all these? The next day, Wood asked for change for a twenty-pound bill. Hayes said he had but three guineas. And when asked by Catherine where the money was that was paid the day before, said that it was at the banker's. "The man is going to fly," said Wood; "that is sure: if he does, I know him — he will leave his wife without a shilling."

He watched him for several days regularly: two or three more bags were added to the former number. "They are pretty things, guineas," thought Wood, "and tell no tales, like bank-bills." And he thought over the days when he and Macshane used to ride abroad in search of them.

I don't know what thoughts entered into Mr. Wood's brain; but the next day, after seeing young Billings, to whom he actually made a present of a guinea, that young man, in conversing with his mother, said, "Do you know, mother, that if you were free, and married the Count, I should be a lord? It's the German law, Mr. Wood says; and you know he was in them countries with Marlborough."

"Ay, that he would," said Mr. Wood, "in Germany: but Germany is n't England; and it's no use talking of such things."

"Hush, child," said Mrs. Hayes, quite eagerly: "how can *I* marry the Count? Besides, a'n't I married, and is n't he too great a lord for me?"

"Too great a lord? — not a whit, mother. If it was n't for Hayes, I might be a lord now. He gave

Digitized by Google

me five guineas only last week; but curse the skinflint who never will part with a shilling."

"It's not so bad as his striking your mother, Tom. I had my stick up, and was ready to fell him t' other night," added Mr. Wood. And herewith he smiled, and looked steadily in Mrs. Catherine's face. She dared not look again; but she felt that the old man knew a secret that she had been trying to hide from herself. Fool! he knew it; and Hayes knew it dimly: and never, never, since that day of the gala, had it left her, sleeping or waking. When Hayes, in his fear, had proposed to sleep away from her, she started with joy: she had been afraid that she might talk in her sleep, and so let slip her horrible confession.

Old Wood knew all her history since the period of the Marylebone fête. He had wormed it out of her, day by day; he had counselled her how to act; warned her not to yield; to procure, at least, a certain provision for her son, and a handsome settlement for herself, if she determined on quitting her husband. The old man looked on the business in a proper philosophical light, told her bluntly that he saw she was bent upon going off with the Count, and bade her take precautions; else she might be left as she had been before.

Catherine denied all these charges; but she saw the Count daily, notwithstanding, and took all the measures which Wood had recommended to her. They were very prudent ones. Galgenstein grew hourly more in love: never had he felt such a flame; not in the best days of his youth; not for the fairest princess, countess, or actress, from Vienna to Paris.

At length — it was the night after he had seen Hayes counting his money-bags — old Wood spoke to Mrs. Hayes very seriously. "That husband of yours, Cat," said he, "meditates some treason; ay, and fancies we

Digitized by Google

are about such. He listens nightly at your door and at mine: he is going to leave you, be sure on 't; and if he leaves you, he leaves you to starve."

"I can be rich elsewhere," said Mrs. Cat.

"What, with Max?"

"Ay, with Max: and why not?" said Mrs. Hayes.

"Why not, fool! Do you recollect Birmingham? Do you think that Galgenstein, who is so tender now because he *has n't* won you, will be faithful because he *has?* Psha, woman, men are not made so! Don't go to him until you are sure: if you were a widow now, he would marry you; but never leave yourself at his mercy: if you were to leave your husband to go to him, he would desert you in a fortnight!"

She might have been a Countess! she knew she might, but for this cursed barrier between her and her fortune. Wood knew what she was thinking of, and smiled grimly.

"Besides," he continued, "remember Tom. As sure as you leave Hayes without some security from Max, the boy's ruined: he who might be a lord, if his mother had but —— Psha! never mind: that boy will go on the road, as sure as my name's Wood. He's a Turpin cock in his eye, my dear, — a regular Tyburn look. He knows too many of that sort already; and is too fond of a bottle and a girl to resist and be honest when it comes to the pinch."

"It's all true," said Mrs. Hayes. "Tom's a high mettlesome fellow, and would no more mind a ride on Hounslow Heath than he does a walk now in the Mall."

"Do you want him hanged, my dear?" said Wood.

"Ah, Doctor!"

"It *is* a pity, and that's sure," concluded Mr. Wood, knocking the ashes out of his pipe, and closing this interesting conversation. "It is a pity that that old

Digitized by Google

skinflint should be in the way of both your fortunes; and he about to fling you over, too!"

Mrs. Catherine retired musing, as Mr. Billings had previously done; a sweet smile of contentment lighted up the venerable features of Doctor Wood, and he walked abroad into the streets as happy a fellow as any in London.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XII

TREATS OF LOVE, AND PREPARES FOR DEATH

AND to begin this chapter, we cannot do better than quote a part of a letter from M. l'Abbé O'Flaherty to Madame la Comtesse de X—— at Paris: —

"MADAM, — The little Arouet de Voltaire, who hath come 'hither to take a turn in England,' as I see by the post of this morning, hath brought me a charming pacquet from your ladyship's hands, which ought to render a reasonable man happy; but, alas! makes your slave miserable. I think of dear Paris (and something more dear than all Paris, of which, Madam, I may not venture to speak further) — I think of dear Paris, and find myself in this dismal *Vitehall*, where, when the fog clears up, I can catch a glimpse of muddy Thames, and of that fatal palace which the kings of England have been obliged to exchange for your noble castle of Saint Germains, that stands so stately by silver Seine. Truly, no bad bargain. For my part, I would give my grand ambassadorial saloons, hangings, gildings, feasts, valets, ambassadors and all, for a *bicoque* in sight of the Thuilleries' towers, or my little cell in the Irlandois.

"My last sheets have given you a pretty notion of our ambassador's public doings; now for a pretty piece of private scandal respecting that great man. Figure to yourself, Madam, his Excellency is in love; actually in love, talking day and night about a certain fair one whom he hath picked out of a gutter; who is well nigh forty years old; who was his mistress

Digitized by Google

when he was in England a captain of dragoons, some sixty, seventy, or a hundred years since; who hath had a son by him, moreover, a sprightly lad, apprentice to a tailor of eminence that has the honour of making his Excellency's breeches.

"Since one fatal night when he met this fair creature at a certain place of publique resort, called Marylebone Gardens, our Cyrus hath been an altered creature. Love hath mastered this brainless ambassador, and his antics afford me food for perpetual mirth. He sits now opposite to me at a table inditing a letter to his Catherine, and copying it from — what do you think? from the 'Grand Cyrus.' '*I swear, madam, that my happiness would be to offer you this hand, as I have my heart long ago, and I beg you to bear in mind this declaration.*' I have just dictated to him the above tender words; for our envoy, I need not tell you, is not strong at writing or thinking.

"The fair Catherine, I must tell you, is no less than a carpenter's wife, a well-to-do bourgeois, living at the Tyburn, or Gallows Road. She found out her ancient lover very soon after our arrival, and hath a marvellous hankering to be a Count's lady. A pretty little creature is this Madam Catherine. Billets, breakfasts, pretty walks, presents of silks and satins, pass daily between the pair; but, strange to say, the lady is as virtuous as Diana, and hath resisted all my Count's cajoleries hitherto. The poor fellow told me, with tears in his eyes, that he believed he should have carried her by storm on the very first night of their meeting, but that her son stepped into the way; and he or somebody else hath been in the way ever since. Madam will never appear alone. I believe it is this wondrous chastity of the lady that has elicited this wondrous constancy of the gentleman. She is holding out for a settlement; who knows if not for a marriage? Her husband, she says, is ailing; her lover is fool enough, and she herself conducts her negotiations, as I must honestly own, with a pretty notion of diplomacy."

. . . . . .

Digitized by Google

This is the only part of the reverend gentleman's letter that directly affects this history. The rest contains some scandal concerning greater personages about the court, a great share of abuse of the Elector of Hanover, and a pretty description of a boxing-match at Mr. Figg's amphitheatre in Oxford Road, where John Wells, of Edmund Bury (as by the papers may be seen), master of the noble science of self-defence, did engage with Edward Sutton, of Gravesend, master of the said science; and the issue of the combat.

"N.B."—adds the Father, in a postscript—"Monsieur Figue gives a hat to be cudgelled for before the Master mount; and the whole of this fashionable information hath been given me by Monseigneur's son, Monsieur Billings, *garçon tailleur*, Chevalier de Galgenstein."

Mr. Billings was, in fact, a frequent visitor at the Ambassador's house; to whose presence he, by a general order, was always admitted. As for the connection between Mrs. Catherine and her former admirer, the Abbé's history of it is perfectly correct; nor can it be said that this wretched woman, whose tale now begins to wear a darker hue, was, in anything but *soul*, faithless to her husband. But she hated him, longed to leave him, and loved another: the end was coming quickly, and every one of our unknowing actors and actresses were to be implicated, more or less, in the catastrophe.

It will be seen that Mrs. Cat had followed pretty closely the injunctions of Mr. Wood in regard to her dealings with the Count; who grew more heart-stricken and tender daily, as the completion of his wishes was delayed, and his desires goaded by contradiction. The Abbé has quoted one portion of a letter written by him; here is the entire performance, extracted, as the holy father said, chiefly from the romance of the "Grand Cyrus:"—

Digitized by Google

"*Unhappy* MAXIMILIAN *unto unjust* CATHERINA.

"MADAM, — It must needs be that I love you better than any ever did, since, notwithstanding your injustice in calling me perfidious, I love you no less than I did before. On the contrary, my passion is so violent, and your unjust accusation makes me so sensible of it, that if you did but know the resentments of my soule, you would confess your selfe the most cruell and unjust woman in the world. You shall, ere long, Madam, see me at your feete; and as you were my first passion, so you will be my last.

"On my knees I will tell you, at the first handsom opportunity, that the grandure of my passion can only be equalled by your beauty; it hath driven me to such a fatall necessity, as that I cannot hide the misery which you have caused. Sure, the hostil goddes have, to plague me, ordayned that fatal marridge, by which you are bound to one so infinitly below you in degree. Were that bond of ill-omind Hymen cut in twayn witch binds you, I swear, Madam, that my happiniss woulde be to offer you this hande, as I have my harte long agoe. And I praye you to beare in minde this declaraçion, which I here sign with my hande, and witch I pray you may one day be called upon to prove the truth on. Beleave me, Madam, that there is none in the world who doth more honor to your vertue than myselfe, nor who wishes your happinesse with more zeal than — MAXIMILIAN.

"From my lodgings in Whitehall, this 25th of February.

"*To the incomparable Catherina, these, with a scarlet satten petticoat.*"

The Count had debated about the sentence promising marriage in event of Hayes's death; but the honest Abbé cut these scruples very short, by saying, justly, that, because he wrote in that manner, there was no need for him to act so; that he had better not sign and address the note in full; and that he presumed his Excellency was not quite so timid as to fancy that the woman

Digitized by Google

would follow him all the way to Germany, when his diplomatic duties would be ended; as they would soon.

The receipt of this billet caused such a flush of joy and exultation to unhappy happy Mrs. Catherine, that Wood did not fail to remark it, and speedily learned the contents of the letter. Wood had no need to bid the poor wretch guard it very carefully: it never from that day forth left her; it was her title of nobility, — her pass to rank, wealth, happiness. She began to look down on her neighbours; her manner to her husband grew more than ordinarily scornful; the poor, vain wretch longed to tell her secret, and to take her place openly in the world. She a Countess, and Tom a Count's son! She felt that she should royally become the title!

About this time — and Hayes was very much frightened at the prevalence of the rumour — it suddenly began to be bruited about in his quarter that he was going to quit the country. The story was in everybody's mouth; people used to sneer, when he turned pale, and wept, and passionately denied it. It was said, too, that Mrs. Hayes was not his wife, but his mistress — everybody had this story, — his mistress, whom he treated most cruelly, and was about to desert. The tale of the blow which had felled her to the ground was known in all quarters. When he declared that the woman tried to stab him, nobody believed him: the women said he would have been served right if she had done so. How had these stories gone abroad? "Three days more, and I *will* fly," thought Hayes; "and the world may say what it pleases."

Ay, fool, fly — away so swiftly that Fate cannot overtake thee: hide so cunningly that Death shall not find thy place of refuge!

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XIII

BEING A PREPARATION FOR THE END

THE reader, doubtless, doth now partly understand what dark acts of conspiracy are beginning to gather around Mr. Hayes; and possibly half comprehended —

1. That if the rumour was universally credited which declared that Mrs. Catherine was only Hayes's mistress, and not his wife,

She might, if she so inclined, marry another person; and thereby not injure her fame and excite wonderment, but actually add to her reputation.

2. That if all the world did steadfastly believe that Mr. Hayes intended to desert this woman, after having cruelly maltreated her,

The direction which his journey might take would be of no consequence; and he might go to Highgate, to Edinburgh, to Constantinople, nay, down a well, and no soul would care to ask whither he had gone.

These points Mr. Hayes had not considered duly. The latter case had been put to him, and annoyed him, as we have seen; the former had actually been pressed upon him by Mrs. Hayes herself; who, in almost the only communication she had had with him since their last quarrel, had asked him, angrily, in the presence of Wood and her son, whether he had dared to utter such lies, and how it came to pass that the neighbours looked scornfully at her, and avoided her?

Digitized by Google

To this charge Mr. Hayes pleaded, very meekly, that he was not guilty; and young Billings, taking him by the collar, and clinching his fist in his face, swore a dreadful oath that he would have the life of him, if he dared abuse his mother. Mrs. Hayes then spoke of the general report abroad, that he was going to desert her; which, if he attempted to do, Mr. Billings vowed that he would follow him to Jerusalem, and have his blood. These threats, and the insolent language of young Billings, rather calmed Hayes than agitated him: he longed to be on his journey; but he began to hope that no obstacle would be placed in the way of it. For the first time since many days, he began to enjoy a feeling something akin to security, and could look with tolerable confidence towards a comfortable completion of his own schemes of treason.

These points being duly settled, we are now arrived, O public, at a point for which the author's soul hath been yearning ever since this history commenced. We are now come, O critic, to a stage of the work when this tale begins to assume an appearance so interestingly horrific, that you must have a heart of stone if you are not interested by it. O candid and discerning reader, who art sick of the hideous scenes of brutal bloodshed which have of late come forth from pens of certain eminent wits,[1] if you turn away disgusted from the book, remember that this passage hath not been written for you, or such as you, who have taste to know and hate the style in which it hath been composed; but for the public, which hath no such taste: — for the public, which can patronise four different reprsentations of Jack Sheppard, — for the public, whom its literary providers have gorged with blood and foul Newgate garbage, — and to whom we poor creatures, humbly following at the

[1] This was written in 1840.

Digitized by Google

tail of our great high-priests and prophets of the press, may, as in duty bound, offer some small gift of our own: a little mite truly, but given with good will. Come up, then, fair Catherine, and brave Count; — appear gallant Brock, and faultless Billings; — hasten hither, honest John Hayes: the former chapters are but flowers in which we have been decking you for the sacifice. Ascend to the altar, ye innocent lambs, and prepare for the final act: lo! the knife is sharpened, and the sacrificer ready! Stretch your throats, sweet ones, — for the public is thirsty, and must have blood!

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER THE LAST

THAT Mr. Hayes had some notion of the attachment of Monsieur de Galgenstein for his wife is very certain: the man could not but perceive that she was more gaily dressed, and more frequently absent than usual; and must have been quite aware that from the day of the quarrel until the present period, Catherine had never asked him for a shilling for the house expenses. He had not the heart to offer, however; nor, in truth, did she seem to remember that money was due.

She received, in fact, many sums from the tender Count. Tom was likewise liberally provided by the same personage; who was, moreover, continually sending presents of various kinds to the person on whom his affections were centred.

One of these gifts was a hamper of choice mountain-wine, which had been some weeks in the house, and excited the longing of Mr. Hayes; who loved wine very much. This liquor was generally drank by Wood and Billings, who applauded it greatly; and many times, in passing through the back-parlour, which he had to traverse in order to reach the stair, Hayes had cast a tender eye towards the drink; of which, had he dared, he would have partaken.

On the 1st of March, in the year 1726, Mr. Hayes had gathered together almost the whole sum with which he intended to decamp; and having on that very day recovered the amount of a bill which he thought almost hopeless, he returned home in tolerable good-humour;

Digitized by Google

and feeling, so near was his period of departure, something like security. Nobody had attempted the least violence on him: besides, he was armed with pistols, had his money in bills and a belt about his person, and really reasoned with himself that there was no danger for him to apprehend.

He entered the house about dusk, at five o'clock. Mrs. Hayes was absent with Mr. Billings; only Mr. Wood was smoking, according to his wont, in the little back-parlour; and as Mr. Hayes passed, the old gentleman addressed him in a friendly voice, and, wondering that he had been such a stranger, invited him to sit and take a glass of wine. There was a light and a foreman in the shop; Mr. Hayes gave his injunctions to that person, and saw no objection to Mr. Wood's invitation.

The conversation, at first a little stiff between the two gentlemen, began speedily to grow more easy and confidential: and so particularly bland and good-humoured was Mr. or Doctor Wood, that his companion was quite caught, and softened by the charm of his manner; and the pair became as good friends as in the former days of their intercourse.

"I wish you would come down sometimes of evenings," quoth Doctor Wood; "for, though no book-learned man, Mr. Hayes, look you, you are a man of the world, and I can't abide the society of boys. There's Tom, now, since this tiff with Mrs. Cat, the scoundrel plays the Grand Turk here! The pair of 'em, betwixt them, have completely gotten the upper hand of you. Confess that you are beaten, Master Hayes, and don't like the boy?"

"No more I do," said Hayes; "and that's the truth on't. A man doth not like to have his wife's sins flung in his face, nor to be perpetually bullied in his own house by such a fiery sprig as that."

Digitized by Google

"Mischief, sir, — mischief only," said Wood: "'t is the fun of youth, sir, and will go off as age comes to the lad. Bad as you may think him — and he is as skittish and fierce, sure enough, as a young colt — there is good stuff in him; and though he hath, or fancies he hath, the right to abuse every one, by the Lord he will let none others do so! Last week, now, did n't he tell Mrs. Cat that you served her right in the last beating matter? and were n't they coming to knives, just as in your case? By my faith, they were. Ay, and at the 'Braund's Head,' when some fellow said that you were a bloody Bluebeard, and would murder your wife, stab me if Tom was n't up in an instant and knocked the fellow down for abusing of you!"

The first of these stories was quite true; the second was only a charitable invention of Mr. Wood, and employed, doubtless, for the amiable purpose of bringing the old and young men together. The scheme partially succeeded; for, though Hayes was not so far mollified towards Tom as to entertain any affection for a young man whom he had cordially detested ever since he knew him, yet he felt more at ease and cheerful regarding himself: and surely not without reason. While indulging in these benevolent sentiments, Mrs. Catherine and her son arrived, and found, somewhat to their astonishment, Mr. Hayes seated in the back-parlour, as in former times; and they were invited by Mr. Wood to sit down and drink.

We have said that certain bottles of mountain-wine were presented by the Count to Mrs. Catherine: these were, at Mr. Wood's suggestion, produced; and Hayes, who had long been coveting them, was charmed to have an opportunity to drink his fill. He forthwith began bragging of his great powers as a drinker, and vowed that he could manage eight bottles without becoming intoxicated.

Digitized by Google

Mr. Wood grinned strangely, and looked in a peculiar way at Tom Billings, who grinned too. Mrs. Cat's eyes were turned towards the ground; but her face was deadly pale.

The party began drinking. Hayes kept up his reputation as a toper, and swallowed one, two, three bottles without wincing. He grew talkative and merry, and began to sing songs and to cut jokes; at which Wood laughed hugely, and Billings after him. Mrs. Cat could not laugh; but sat silent. What ailed her? Was she thinking of the Count? She had been with Max that day, and had promised him, for the next night at ten, an interview near his lodgings at Whitehall. It was the first time that she would see him alone. They were to meet (not a very cheerful place for a love-tryst) at St. Margaret's churchyard, near Westminster Abbey. Of this, no doubt, Cat was thinking; but what could she mean by whispering to Wood, "No, no! for God's sake, not to-night!"

"She means we are to have no more liquor," said Wood to Mr. Hayes; who heard this sentence, and seemed rather alarmed.

"That's it, — no more liquor," said Catherine, eagerly; "you have had enough to-night. Go to bed, and lock your door, and sleep, Mr. Hayes."

"But I say I've *not* had enough drink!" screamed Hayes; "I'm good for five bottles more, and wager I will drink them too."

"Done, for a guinea!" said Wood.

"Done, and done!" said Billings.

"Be *you* quiet!" growled Hayes, scowling at the lad. "I will drink what I please, and ask no counsel of yours." And he muttered some more curses against young Billings, which showed what his feelings were towards his wife's son; and which the latter, for a

Digitized by Google

wonder, only received with a scornful smile, and a knowing look at Wood.

Well! the five extra bottles were brought, and drank by Mr. Hayes; and seasoned by many songs from the *recueil* of Mr. Thomas D'Urfey and others. The chief part of the talk and merriment was on Hayes's part; as, indeed, was natural, — for, while he drank bottle after bottle of wine, the other two gentlemen confined themselves to small beer, — both pleading illness as an excuse for their sobriety.

And now might we depict, with much accuracy, the course of Mr. Hayes's intoxication, as it rose from the merriment of the three-bottle point to the madness of the four — from the uproarious quarrelsomeness of the sixth bottle to the sickly stupidity of the seventh; but we are desirous of bringing this tale to a conclusion, and must pretermit all consideration of a subject so curious, so instructive, and so delightful. Suffice it to say, as a matter of history, that Mr. Hayes did actually drink seven bottles of mountain-wine; and that Mr. Thomas Billings went to the "Braund's Head," in Bond Street, and purchased another, which Hayes likewise drank.

"That 'll do," said Mr. Wood to young Billings; and they led Hayes up to bed, whither, in truth, he was unable to walk himself.

. . . . . .

. . . . . .

Mrs. Springatt, the lodger, came down to ask what the noise was. "'T is only Tom Billings making merry with some friends from the country," answered Mrs. Hayes; whereupon Springatt retired, and the house was quiet.

. . . . . .

. . . . . .

. . . . . .

Digitized by Google

Some scuffling and stamping was heard about eleven o'clock.

. . . . . .

. . . . . .

. . . . . .

After they had seen Mr. Hayes to bed, Billings remembered that he had a parcel to carry to some person in the neighbourhood of the Strand; and, as the night was remarkably fine, he and Mr. Wood agreed to walk together, and set forth accordingly.

[Here follows a description of the THAMES AT MIDNIGHT, in a fine historical style; with an account of Lambeth, Westminster, the Savoy, Baynard's Castle, Arundel House, the Temple; of Old London Bridge, with its twenty arches, "on which be houses builded, so that it seemeth rather a continuall street than a bridge;" of Bankside, and the "Globe" and the "Fortune" Theatres; of the ferries across the river, and of the pirates who infest the same, — namely, tinklermen, petermen, hebbermen, trawlermen; of the fleet of barges that lay at the Savoy steps; and of the long lines of slim wherries sleeping on the river-banks and basking and shining in the moonbeams. A combat on the river is described, that takes place between the crews of a tinklerman's boat and the water-bailiff's. Shouting his war-cry, "St. Mary Overy *à la rescousse!*" the water-bailiff sprung at the throat of the tinklerman captain. The crews of both vessels, as if aware that the struggle of their chiefs would decide the contest, ceased hostilities, and awaited on their respective poops the issue of the death-shock. It was not long coming. "Yield, dog!" said the water-bailiff. The tinklerman could not answer, — for his throat was grasped too tight in the iron clench of the city champion; but drawing his snickersnee, he plunged it seven times in the bailiff's chest: still the latter fell not. The death-rattle gurgled in the throat of his opponent; his arms fell heavily to his side. Foot to foot, each standing at the side of his boat, stood the two brave men, — *they were both dead!* "In the name of St. Clement Danes," said the master, "give way, my men!" and, thrusting forward his halberd (seven feet long, richly decorated with velvet and brass nails, and having the city arms, argent, a cross gules, and in the first quarter a dagger displayed of the

Digitized by Google

second), he thrust the tinklerman's boat away from his own; and at once the bodies of the captains plunged down, down, down, down in the unfathomable waters.

After this follows another episode. Two masked ladies quarrel at the door of a tavern overlooking the Thames: they turn out to be Stella and Vanessa, who have followed Swift thither; who is in the act of reading "Gulliver's Travels" to Gay, Arbuthnot, Bolingbroke, and Pope. Two fellows are sitting shuddering under a doorway; to one of them Tom Billings flung a sixpence. He little knew that the names of those two young men were — *Samuel Johnson* and *Richard Savage*.]

Digitized by Google

ANOTHER LAST CHAPTER

MR. HAYES did not join the family the next day; and it appears that the previous night's reconciliation was not very durable; for when Mrs. Springatt asked Wood for Hayes, Mr. Wood stated that Hayes had gone away without saying whither he was bound, or how long he might be absent. He only said, in rather a sulky tone, that he should probably pass the night at a friend's house. "For my part, I know of no friend he hath," added Mr. Wood; "and pray heaven that he may not think of deserting his poor wife, whom he hath beaten and ill-used so already!" In this prayer Mrs. Springatt joined; and so these two worthy people parted.

What business Billings was about cannot be said; but he was this night bound towards Marylebone Fields, as he was the night before for the Strand and Westminster; and, although the night was very stormy and rainy, as the previous evening had been fine, old Wood good-naturedly resolved upon accompanying him; and forth they sallied together.

Mrs. Catherine, too, had *her* business, as we have seen; but this was of a very delicate nature. At nine o'clock, she had an appointment with the Count; and faithfully, by that hour, had found her way to Saint Margaret's churchyard, near Westminster Abbey, where she awaited Monsieur de Galgenstein.

The spot was convenient, being very lonely, and at the same time close to the Count's lodgings at White-

Digitized by Google

hall. His Excellency came, but somewhat after the hour; for, to say the truth, being a freethinker, he had the most firm belief in ghosts and demons, and did not care to pace a churchyard alone. He was comforted, therefore, when he saw a woman muffled in a cloak, who held out her hand to him at the gate, and said, "Is that you?" He took her hand, — it was very clammy and cold; and at her desire he bade his confidential footman, who had attended him with a torch, to retire, and leave him to himself.

The torch-bearer retired, and left them quite in darkness; and the pair entered the little cemetery, cautiously threading their way among the tombs. They sat down on one, underneath a tree it seemed to be; the wind was very cold, and its piteous howling was the only noise that broke the silence of the place. Catherine's teeth were chattering, for all her wraps; and when Max drew her close to him, and encircled her waist with one arm, and pressed her hand, she did not repulse him, but rather came close to him, and with her own damp fingers feebly returned his pressure.

The poor thing was very wretched and weeping. She confided to Max the cause of her grief. She was alone in the world, — alone and penniless. Her husband had left her; she had that very day received a letter from him which confirmed all that she had suspected so long. He had left her, carried away all his property, and would not return!

If we say that a selfish joy filled the breast of Monsieur de Galgenstein, the reader will not be astonished. A heartless libertine, he felt glad at the prospect of Catherine's ruin; for he hoped that necessity would make her his own. He clasped the poor thing to his heart, and vowed that he would replace the husband she had lost, and that his fortune should be hers.

Digitized by Google

"Will you replace him?" said she.

"Yes, truly, in everything but the name, dear Catherine; and when he dies, I swear you shall be Countess of Galgenstein."

"Will you swear?" she cried, eagerly.

"By everything that is most sacred: were you free now, I would" (and here he swore a terrific oath) "at once make you mine."

We have seen before that it cost Monsieur de Galgenstein nothing to make these vows. Hayes was likely, too, to live as long as Catherine — as long, at least, as the Count's connection with her; but he was caught in his own snare.

She took his hand and kissed it repeatedly, and bathed it in her tears, and pressed it to her bosom. "Max," she said, "*I am free!* Be mine, and I will love you as I have done for years and years."

Max started back. "What, is he dead?" he said.

"No, no, not dead: but he never was my husband."

He let go her hand, and, interrupting her, said sharply, "Indeed, madam, if this carpenter never was your husband, I see no cause why *I* should be. If a lady, who hath been for twenty years the mistress of a miserable country boor, cannot find it in her heart to put up with the protection of a nobleman — a sovereign's representative — she may seek a husband elsewhere!"

"I was no man's mistress except yours," sobbed Catherine, wringing her hands and sobbing wildly; "but, O heaven! I deserved this. Because I was a child, and you saw, and ruined, and left me — because, in my sorrow and repentance, I wished to repair my crime, and was touched by that man's love, and married him — because he too deceives and leaves me — because, after loving you — madly loving you for twenty years — I will

Digitized by Google

not now forfeit your respect, and degrade myself by yielding to your will, you too must scorn me! It is too much — too much — O heaven!" and the wretched woman fell back almost fainting.

Max was almost frightened by this burst of sorrow on her part, and was coming forward to support her; but she motioned him away, and, taking from her bosom a letter, said, "If it were light, you could see, Max, how cruelly I have been betrayed by that man who called himself my husband. Long before he married me, he was married to another. This woman is still living, he says; and he says he leaves me for ever."

At this moment the moon, which had been hidden behind Westminster Abbey, rose above the vast black mass of that edifice, and poured a flood of silver light upon the little church of St. Margaret's and the spot where the lovers stood. Max was at a little distance from Catherine, pacing gloomily up and down the flags. She remained at her old position at the tombstone under the tree, or pillar, as it seemed to be, as the moon got up. She was leaning against the pillar, and holding out to Max, with an arm beautifully white and rounded, the letter she had received from her husband: "Read it, Max," she said: "I asked for light, and here is heaven's own, by which you may read."

But Max did not come forward to receive it. On a sudden his face assumed a look of the most dreadful surprise and agony. He stood still, and stared with wild eyes starting from their sockets; he stared upwards, at a point seemingly above Catherine's head. At last he raised up his finger slowly, and said, "Look, Cat — *the head — the head!*" Then uttering a horrible laugh, he fell down grovelling among the stones, gibbering and writhing in a fit of epilepsy.

Catherine started forward and looked up. She had

Digitized by Google

been standing against a post, not a tree — the moon was shining full on it now; and on the summit, strangely distinct, and smiling ghastly, was a livid human head.

The wretched woman fled — she dared look no more. And some hours afterwards, when, alarmed by the Count's continued absence, his confidential servant came back to seek for him in the churchyard, he was found sitting on the flags, staring full at the head, and laughing, and talking to it wildly, and nodding at it. He was taken up a hopeless idiot, and so lived for years and years; clanking the chain, and moaning under the lash, and howling through long nights when the moon peered through the bars of his solitary cell, and he buried his face in the straw.

There — the murder is out! And having indulged himself in a chapter of the very finest writing, the author begs the attention of the British public towards it; humbly conceiving that it possesses some of those peculiar merits which have rendered the fine writing in other chapters of the works of other authors so famous.

Without bragging at all, let us just point out the chief claims of the above pleasing piece of composition. In the first place, it is perfectly stilted and unnatural; the dialogue and the sentiments being artfully arranged, so as to be as strong and majestic as possible. Our dear Cat is but a poor, illiterate country wench, who has come from cutting her husband's throat; and yet, see! she talks and looks like a tragedy princess, who is suffering in the most virtuous blank verse. This is the proper end of fiction, and one of the greatest triumphs that a novelist can achieve: for to make people sympathise

Digitized by Google

with virtue is a vulgar trick that any common fellow can do; but it is not everybody who can take a scoundrel, and cause us to weep and whimper over him as though he were a very saint. Give a young lady of five years old a skein of silk and a brace of netting-needles, and she will in a short time turn you out a decent silk purse — anybody can; but try her with a sow's ear, and see whether she can make a silk purse out of *that*. That is the work for your real great artist; and pleasant it is to see how many have succeeded in these latter days.

The subject is strictly historical, as any one may see by referring to the *Daily Post* of March 3, 1726, which contains the following paragraph: —

"Yesterday morning, early, a man's head, that by the freshness of it seemed to have been newly cut off from the body, having its own hair on, was found by the river's side, near Millbank, Westminster, and was afterwards exposed to public view in St. Margaret's churchyard, where thousands of people have seen it; but none could tell who the unhappy person was, much less who committed such a horrid and barbarous action. There are various conjectures relating to the deceased; but there being nothing certain, we omit them. The head was much hacked and mangled in the cutting off."

The head which caused such an impression upon Monsieur de Galgenstein was, indeed, once on the shoulders of Mr. John Hayes, who lost it under the following circumstances. We have seen how Mr. Hayes was induced to drink. Mr. Hayes having been encouraged in drinking the wine, and growing very merry therewith, he sang and danced about the room; but his wife, fearing the quantity he had drunk would not have the wished-for effect on him, she sent away for another bottle, of which he drank also. This effectually answered their expectations; and Mr. Hayes

Digitized by Google

became thereby intoxicated, and deprived of his understanding.

He, however, made shift to get into the other room, and, throwing himself upon the bed, fell asleep; upon which Mrs. Hayes reminded them of the affair in hand, and told them that was the most proper juncture to finish the business.[1]

. . . . . .

Ring, ding, ding! the gloomy green curtain drops, the *dramatis personæ* are daily disposed of, the nimble candle-snuffers put out the lights, and the audience goeth pondering home. If the critic take the pains to ask why the author, who hath been so diffuse in describing the early and fabulous acts of Mrs. Catherine's existence, should so hurry off the catastrophe where a deal of the very finest writing might have been employed, Solomons replies that the "ordinary" narrative is far more emphatic than any composition of his own could be, with all the rhetorical graces which he might employ. Mr. Aram's trial, as taken by the penny-a-liners of those days, hath always interested him more than the lengthened and poetical report which an eminent novelist has given of the same. Mr. Turpin's adventures are more instructive and agreeable to him in the account of the Newgate Plutarch, than in the learned Ainsworth's "Biographical Dictionary." And

[1] The description of the murder and the execution of the culprits, which here follows in the original, was taken from the newspapers of the day. Coming from such a source they have, as may be imagined, no literary merit whatever. The details of the crime are simply horrible, without one touch of even that sort of romance which sometimes gives a little dignity to murder. As such they precisely suited Mr. Thackeray's purpose at the time — which was to show the real manners and customs of the Sheppards and Turpins who were then the popular heroes of fiction. But now-a-days there is no such purpose to serve, and therefore these too literal details are omitted.

Digitized by Google

as he believes that the professional gentlemen who are employed to invest such heroes with the rewards that their great actions merit, will go through the ceremony of the grand cordon with much more accuracy and despatch than can be shown by the most distinguished amateur; in like manner he thinks that the history of such investitures should be written by people directly concerned, and not by admiring persons without, who must be ignorant of many of the secrets of Ketchcraft. We very much doubt if Milton himself could make a description of an execution half so horrible as the simple lines in the *Daily Post* of a hundred and ten years since, that now lies before us — "herrlich wie am ersten Tag," — as bright and clean as on the day of publication. Think of it! it has been read by Belinda at her toilet, scanned at "Button's" and "Will's," sneered at by wits, talked of in palaces and cottages, by a busy race in wigs, red heels, hoops, patches, and rags of all variety — a busy race that hath long since plunged and vanished in the unfathomable gulf towards which we march so briskly.

Where are they? "Afflavit Deus" — and they are gone! Hark! is not the same wind roaring still that shall sweep us down? and yonder stands the compositor at his types who shall put up a pretty paragraph some day to say how, "*Yesterday*, at his house in Grosvenor Square," or at "Botany Bay, universally regretted," died So-and-So. Into what profound moralities is the paragraph concerning Mrs. Catherine's burning leading us!

Ay, truly, and to that very point have we wished to come; for, having finished our delectable meal, it behoves us to say a word or two by way of grace at its conclusion, and be heartily thankful that it is over. It has been the writer's object carefully to exclude from his

Digitized by Google

drama (except in two very insignificant instances — mere walking-gentlemen parts,) any characters but those of scoundrels of the very highest degree. That he has not altogether failed in the object he had in view, is evident from some newspaper critiques which he has had the good fortune to see; and which abuse the tale of "Catherine" as one of the dullest, most vulgar, and immoral works extant. It is highly gratifying to the author to find that such opinions are abroad, as they convince him that the taste for Newgate literature is on the wane, and that when the public critic has right down undisguised immorality set before him, the honest creature is shocked at it, as he should be, and can declare his indignation in good round terms of abuse. The characters of the tale *are* immoral, and no doubt of it; but the writer humbly hopes the end is not so. The public was, in our notion, dosed and poisoned by the prevailing style of literary practice, and it was necessary to administer some medicine that would produce a wholesome nausea, and afterwards bring about a more healthy habit.

And thank heaven, this effect *has* been produced in very many instances, and that the "Catherine" cathartic has acted most efficaciously. The author has been pleased at the disgust which his work has excited, and has watched with benevolent carefulness the wry faces that have been made by many of the patients who have swallowed the dose. Solomons remembers, at the establishment in Birchin Lane where he had the honour of receiving his education, there used to be administered to the boys a certain cough-medicine, which was so excessively agreeable that all the lads longed to have colds in order to partake of the remedy. Some of our popular novelists have compounded their drugs in a similar way, and made them so palatable that a public,

Digitized by Google

once healthy and honest, has been well-nigh poisoned by their wares. Solomons defies any one to say the like of himself — that his doses have been as pleasant as champagne, and his pills as sweet as barley-sugar; — it has been his attempt to make vice to appear entirely vicious; and in those instances where he hath occasionally introduced something like virtue, to make the sham as evident as possible, and not allow the meanest capacity a single chance to mistake it.

And what has been the consequence? That wholesome nausea which it has been his good fortune to create wherever he has been allowed to practise in his humble circle.

Has any one thrown away a halfpennnyworth of sympathy upon any person mentioned in this history? Surely no. But abler and more famous men than Solomons have taken a different plan; and it becomes every man in his vocation to cry out against such, and expose their errors as best he may.

Labouring under such ideas, Mr. Isaac Solomons, junior, produced the romance of Mrs. Cat, and confesses himself completely happy to have brought it to a conclusion. His poem may be dull — ay, and probably is. The great Blackmore, the great Dennis, the great Sprat, the great Pomfret, not to mention great men of our own time — have they not also been dull, and had pretty reputations too? Be it granted, Solomons *is* dull; but don't attack his morality; he humbly submits that, in his poem, no man shall mistake virtue for vice, no man shall allow a single sentiment of pity or admiration to enter his bosom for any character of the piece; it being, from beginning to end, a scene of unmixed rascality performed by persons who never deviate into good feeling. And, although he doth not pretend to equal the great modern authors, whom he hath mentioned, in wit

Digitized by Google

or descriptive power; yet, in the point of moral, he meekly believes that he has been their superior; feeling the greatest disgust for the characters he describes, and using his humble endeavour to cause the public also to hate them.

HORSEMONGER LANE, *January*, 1840.

THE END

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

A SHABBY GENTEEL STORY

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

A SHABBY GENTEEL STORY

CHAPTER I

AT that remarkable period when Louis XVIII. was restored a second time to the throne of his fathers, and all the English who had money or leisure rushed over to the Continent, there lived in a certain boarding-house at Brussels a genteel young widow, who bore the elegant name of Mrs. Wellesley Macarty.

In the same house and room with the widow lived her mamma, a lady who was called Mrs. Crabb. Both professed to be rather fashionable people. The Crabbs were of a very old English stock, and the Macartys were, as the world knows, County Cork people; related to the Sheenys, Finnigans, Clancys, and other distinguished families in their part of Ireland. But Ensign Wellesley Mac, not having a shilling, ran off with Miss Crabb, who possessed the same independence; and after having been married about six months to the lady, was carried off suddenly, on the 18th of June, 1815, by a disease very prevalent in those glorious times — the fatal cannon-shot morbus. He, and many hundred young fellows of his regiment, the Clonakilty Fencibles, were attacked by this epidemic on the same day, at a place about ten miles from Brussels, and there

Digitized by Google

perished. The ensign's lady had accompanied her husband to the Continent, and about five months after his death brought into the world two remarkably fine female children.

Mrs. Wellesley's mother had been reconciled to her daughter by this time — for, in truth, Mrs. Crabb had no other child but her runaway Juliana, to whom she flew when she heard of her destitute condition. And, indeed, it was high time that some one should come to the young widow's aid; for as her husband did not leave money, nor anything that represented money, except a number of tailors' and bootmakers' bills, neatly docketed, in his writing-desk, Mrs. Wellesley was in danger of starvation, should no friendly person assist her.

Mrs. Crabb, then, came off to her daughter, whom the Sheenys, Finnigans, and Clancys refused, with one scornful voice, to assist. The fact is, that Mr. Crabb had once been butler to a lord, and his lady a lady's-maid; and at Crabb's death, Mrs. Crabb disposed of the "Ram" hotel and posting-house, where her husband had made three thousand pounds, and was living in genteel ease in a country town, when Ensign Macarty came, saw, and ran away with Juliana. Of such a connection, it was impossible that the great Clancys and Finnigans could take notice; and so once more widow Crabb was compelled to share with her daughter her small income of a hundred and twenty a year.

Upon this, at a boarding-house in Brussels, the two managed to live pretty smartly, and to maintain an honourable reputation. The twins were put out, after the foreign fashion, to nurse, at a village in the neighbourhood; for Mrs. Macarty had been too ill to nurse them; and Mrs. Crabb could not afford to purchase that most expensive article, a private wet-nurse.

There had been numberless tiffs and quarrels between

Digitized by Google

mother and daughter when the latter was in her maiden state; and Mrs. Crabb was, to tell the truth, in nowise sorry when her Jooly disappeared with the ensign, — for the old lady dearly loved a gentleman, and was not a little flattered at being the mother to Mrs. Ensign Macarty. Why the ensign should have run away with his lady at all, as he might have had her for the asking, is no business of ours; nor are we going to rake up old stories and village scandals, which insinuate that Miss Crabb ran away with *him*, for with these points the writer and the reader have nothing to do.

Well, then, the reconciled mother and daughter lived once more together, at Brussels. In the course of a year, Mrs. Macarty's sorrow had much abated; and having a great natural love of dress, and a tolerably handsome face and person, she was induced, without much reluctance, to throw her weeds aside, and to appear in the most becoming and varied costumes which her means and ingenuity could furnish. Considering, indeed, the smallness of the former, it was agreed on all hands that Mrs. Crabb and her daughter deserved wonderful credit, — that is, they managed to keep up as respectable an appearance as if they had five hundred a year; and at church, at tea-parties, and abroad in the streets, to be what is called quite the gentlewomen. If they starved at home, nobody saw it; if they patched and pieced, nobody (it was to be hoped) knew it; if they bragged about their relations and property, could any one say them nay? Thus they lived, hanging on with desperate energy to the skirts of genteel society; Mrs. Crabb, a sharp woman, rather respected her daughter's superior rank; and Mrs. Macarty did not quarrel so much as heretofore with her mamma, on whom herself and her two children were entirely dependent.

Digitized by Google

While affairs were at this juncture, it happened that a young Englishman, James Gann, Esq., of the great oil-house of Gann, Blubbery and Gann (as he took care to tell you before you had been an hour in his company), — it happened, I say, that James Gann, Esq., came to Brussels for a month, for the purpose of perfecting himself in the French language; and while in that capital went to lodge at the very boarding-house which contained Mrs. Crabb and her daughter. Gann was young, weak, inflammable; he saw and adored Mrs. Wellesley Macarty; and she, who was at this period all but engaged to a stout old wooden-legged Scotch regimental surgeon, pitilessly sent Dr. M'Lint about his business, and accepted the addresses of Mr. Gann. How the young man arranged matters with his papa the senior partner, I don't know; but it is certain that there was a quarrel, and afterwards a reconciliation; and it is also known that James Gann fought a duel with the surgeon, — receiving the Æsculapian fire, and discharging his own bullet into the azure skies. About nine thousand times in the course of his after-years did Mr. Gann narrate the history of the combat; it enabled him to go through life with the reputation of a man of courage, and won for him, as he said with pride, the hand of his Juliana; perhaps this was rather a questionable benefit.

One part of the tale, however, honest James never did dare to tell, except when peculiarly excited by wrath or liquor; it was this: that on the day after the wedding, and in the presence of many friends who had come to offer their congratulations, a stout nurse, bearing a brace of chubby little ones, made her appearance; and these rosy urchins, springing forward at the sight of Mrs. James Gann, shouted affectionately, "*Maman! maman!*" at which the lady, blushing rosy red, said,

Digitized by Google

"James, these two are yours;" and poor James well nigh fainted at this sudden paternity so put upon him. "Children!" screamed he, aghast; "whose children?" at which Mrs. Crabb, majestically checking him, said, "These, my dear James, are the daughters of the gallant and good Ensign Macarty, whose widow you yesterday led to the altar. May you be happy with her, and may these blessed children" (tears) "find in you a father, who shall replace him that fell in the field of glory!"

Mrs. Crabb, Mrs. James Gann, Mrs. Major Lolly, Mrs. Piffler, and several ladies present, set up a sob immediately; and James Gann, a good-humoured, soft-hearted man, was quite taken aback. Kissing his lady hurriedly, he vowed that he would take care of the poor little things, and proposed to kiss them likewise; which caress the darlings refused with many roars. Gann's fate was sealed from that minute; and he was properly henpecked by his wife and mother-in-law during the life of the latter. Indeed, it was to Mrs. Crabb that the stratagem of the infant concealment was due; for when her daughter innocently proposed to have or to see the children, the old lady strongly pointed out the folly of such an arrangement, which might, perhaps, frighten away Mr. Gann from the delightful matrimonial trap into which (lucky rogue!) he was about to fall.

Soon after the marriage, the happy pair returned to England, occupying the house in Thames Street, City, until the death of Gann senior; when his son, becoming head of the firm of Gann and Blubbery, quitted the dismal precincts of Billingsgate and colonised in the neighbourhood of Putney; where a neat box, a couple of spare bed-rooms, a good cellar, and a smart gig to drive into and out from town, made a real gentleman of him. Mrs. Gann treated him with much scorn, to be sure,

Digitized by Google

called him a sot, and abused hugely the male companions that he brought down with him to Putney. Honest James would listen meekly, would yield, and would bring down a brace more friends the next day, with whom he would discuss his accustomed number of bottles of port. About this period, a daughter was born to him, called Caroline Brandenburg Gann; so named after a large mansion near Hammersmith, and an injured queen who lived there at the time of the little girl's birth, and who was greatly compassioned and patronised by Mrs. James Gann, and other ladies of distinction. Mrs. James *was* a lady in those days, and gave evening-parties of the very first order.

At this period of time, Mrs. James Gann sent the twins, Rosalind Clancy and Isabella Finnigan Wellesley Macarty, to a boarding-school for young ladies, and grumbled much at the amount of the half-years' bills which her husband was called upon to pay for them; for though James discharged them with perfect good-humour, his lady began to entertain a mean opinion indeed of her pretty young children. They could expect no fortune, she said, from Mr. Gann, and she wondered that he should think of bringing them up expensively, when he had a darling child of his own, for whom he was bound to save all the money that he could lay by.

Grandmamma, too, doted on the little Caroline Brandenburg, and vowed that she would leave her three thousand pounds to this dear infant; for in this way does the world show its respect for that most respectable thing prosperity. Who in this life get the smiles, and the acts of friendship, and the pleasing legacies? — The rich. And I do, for my part, heartily wish that some one would leave me a trifle — say twenty thousand pounds — being perfectly confident that some one

Digitized by Google

else would leave me more; and that I should sink into my grave worth a plum at least.

Little Caroline then had her maid, her airy nursery, her little carriage to drive in, the promise of her grandmamma's consols, and that priceless treasure — her mamma's undivided affection. Gann, too, loved her sincerely, in his careless, good-humoured way; but he determined, notwithstanding, that his step-daughters should have something handsome at his death, but — but for a great BUT.

Gann and Blubbery were in the oil line,— have we not said so? Their profits arose from contracts for lighting a great number of streets in London; and about this period GAS came into use. Gann and Blubbery appeared in the *Gazette;* and, I am sorry to say, so bad had been the management of Blubbery, — so great the extravagance of both partners and their ladies, — that they only paid their creditors fourteenpence halfpenny in the pound.

When Mrs. Crabb heard of this dreadful accident — Mrs. Crabb, who dined thrice a week with her son-in-law; who never would have been allowed to enter the house at all had not honest James interposed his good nature between her quarrelsome daughter and herself — Mrs. Crabb, I say, proclaimed James Gann to be a swindler, a villain, a disreputable, tipsy, vulgar man, and made over her money to the Misses Rosalind Clancy and Isabella Finnigan Macarty; leaving poor little Caroline without one single maravedi. Half of one thousand five hundred pounds allotted to each was to be paid at marriage, the other half on the death of Mrs. James Gann, who was to enjoy the interest thereof. Thus do we rise and fall in this world — thus does Fortune shake her swift wings, and bid us abruptly to resign the gifts (or rather loans) which we have had from her.

Digitized by Google

How Gann and his family lived after their stroke of misfortune, I know not; but as the failing tradesman is going through the process of bankruptcy, and for some months afterwards, it may be remarked that he has usually some mysterious means of subsistence — stray spars of the wreck of his property, on which he manages to seize, and to float for a while. During his retirement, in an obscure lodging in Lambeth, where the poor fellow was so tormented by his wife as to be compelled to fly to the public-house for refuge, Mrs. Crabb died; a hundred a year thus came into the possession of Mrs. Gann; and some of James's friends, who thought him a good fellow in his prosperity, came forward, and furnished a house, in which they placed him, and came to see and comfort him. Then they came to see him not quite so often; then they found out that Mrs. Gann was a sad tyrant, and a silly woman; then the ladies declared *her* to be insupportable, and *Gann* to be a low, tipsy fellow: and the gentlemen could but shake their heads, and admit that the charge was true. Then they left off coming to see him altogether; for such is the way of the world, where many of us have good impulses, and are generous on an occasion, but are wearied by perpetual want, and begin to grow angry at its importunities — being very properly vexed at the daily recurrence of hunger, and the impudent unreasonableness of starvation. Gann, then, had a genteel wife and children, a furnished house, and a hundred pounds a year. How should he live? The wife of James Gann, Esq., would never allow him to demean himself by taking a clerk's place; and James himself, being as idle a fellow as ever was known, was fain to acquiesce in this determination of hers, and to wait for some more genteel employment. And a curious list of such genteel employments might be made out, were

Digitized by Google

one inclined to follow this interesting subject far; shabby compromises with the world, into which poor fellows enter, and still fondly talk of their "position," and strive to imagine that they are really working for their bread.

Numberless lodging-houses are kept by the females of families who have met with reverses: are not "boarding-houses, with a select musical society, in the neighbourhood of the squares," maintained by such? Do not the gentlemen of the boarding-houses issue forth every morning to the City, or make believe to go thither, on some mysterious business which they have? After a certain period, Mrs. James Gann kept a lodging-house (in her own words, received "two inmates into her family"), and Mr. Gann had his mysterious business.

In the year 1835, when this story begins, there stood in a certain back-street in the town of Margate a house, on the door of which might be read, in gleaming brass, the name of Mr. GANN. It was the work of a single smutty servant-maid to clean this brass plate every morning, and to attend as far as possible to the wants of Mr. Gann, his family, and lodgers; and his house being not very far from the sea, and as you might, by climbing up to the roof, get a sight between two chimneys of that multitudinous element, Mrs. Gann set down her lodgings as fashionable; and declared on her cards that her house commanded "a fine view of the sea."

On the wire window-blind of the parlour was written, in large characters, the word OFFICE; and here it was that Gann's services came into play. He was very much changed, poor fellow! and humbled; and from two cards that hung outside the blind, I am led to believe that he did not disdain to be agent to the "London and Jamaica Ginger-Beer Company," and also for a certain preparation called "Gaster's Infants' Farinacio,

Digitized by Google

or Mothers' Invigorating Substitute," — a damp, black, mouldy, half-pound packet of which stood in permanence at one end of the "office" mantelpiece; while a fly-blown ginger-beer bottle occupied the other extremity. Nothing else indicated that this ground-floor chamber was an office, except a huge black inkstand, in which stood a stumpy pen, richly crusted with ink at the nib, and to all appearance for many months enjoying a sinecure.

To this room you saw every day, at two o'clock, the *employé* from the neighbouring hotel bring two quarts of beer; and if you called at that hour, a tremendous smoke, and smell of dinner, would gush out upon you from the "office," as you stumbled over sundry battered tin dish-covers, which lay gaping at the threshold. Thus had that great bulwark of gentility, the dining at six o'clock, been broken in; and the reader must therefore judge that the house of Gann was in a demoralised state.

Gann certainly was. After the ladies had retired to the back-parlour (which, with yellow gauze round the frames, window-curtains, a red silk cabinet piano, and an album, was still tolerably genteel), Gann remained, to transact business in the office. This took place in the presence of friends, and usually consisted in the production of a bottle of gin from the corner cupboard, or, mayhap, a *litre* of brandy, which was given by Gann with a knowing wink, and a fat finger placed on a twinkling red nose: when Mrs. G. was out, James would also produce a number of pipes, that gave this room a constant and agreeble odour of shag tobacco.

In fact, Mr. Gann had nothing to do from morning till night. He was now a fat, bald-headed man of fifty; a dirty dandy on week-days, with a shawl-waistcoat, a tuft of hair to his great double chin, a snuffy shirt-frill, and

Digitized by Google

enormous breast-pin and seals: he had a pilot-coat, with large mother-of-pearl buttons, and always wore a great rattling telescope, with which he might be seen for hours on the sea-shore or the pier, examining the ships, the bathing-machines, the ladies' schools as they paraded up and down the esplanade, and all other objects which the telescopic view might give him. He knew every person connected with every one of the Deal and Dover coaches, and was sure to be witness to the arrival or departure of several of them in the course of the day; he had a word for the ostler about "that grey mare," a nod for the "shooter" or guard, and a bow for the dragsman; he could send parcels for nothing up to town; had twice had Sir Rumble Tumble (the noble driver of the Flash-o'-lightning-light-four-inside-post-coach) "up at his place," and took care to tell you that some of the party were pretty considerably "sewn up," too. He did not frequent the large hotels; but in revenge he knew every person who entered or left them; and was a great man at the "Bag of Nails" and the "Magpie and Punchbowl," where he was president of a club; he took the bass in "Mynheer Van Dunk," "The Wolf," and many other morsels of concerted song, and used to go backwards and forwards to London in the steamers as often as ever he liked, and have his "grub," too, on board. Such was James Gann. Many people, when they wrote to him, addressed him James Gann, Esq.

His reverses and former splendours afforded a never-failing theme of conversation to honest Gann and the whole of his family; and it may be remarked that such pecuniary misfortunes, as they are called, are by no means misfortunes to people of certain dispositions, but actual pieces of good luck. Gann, for instance, used to drink liberally of port and claret, when the house of

Digitized by Google

Gann and Blubbery was in existence, and was henceforth compelled to imbibe only brandy and gin. Now he loved these a thousand times more than the wine; and had the advantage of talking about the latter, and of his great merit in giving them up. In those prosperous days, too, being a gentleman, he could not frequent the public-house as he did at present; and the sanded tavern-parlour was Gann's supreme enjoyment. He was obliged to spend many hours daily in a dark unsavoury room in an alley off Thames Street; and Gann hated books and business, except of other people's. His tastes were low; he loved public-house jokes and company; and now being fallen, was voted at the "Bag of Nails" and the "Magpie" before mentioned a tip-top fellow and real gentleman, whereas he had been considered an ordinary vulgar man by his fashionable associates at Putney. Many men are there who are made to fall, and to profit by the tumble.

As for Mrs. G., or Jooly, as she was indifferently called by her husband, she, too, had gained by her losses. She bragged of her former acquaintances in the most extraordinary way, and to hear her you would fancy that she was known to and connected with half the peerage. Her chief occupation was taking medicine, and mending and altering her gowns. She had a huge taste for cheap finery, loved raffles, tea-parties, and walks on the pier, where she flaunted herself and daughters as gay as butterflies. She stood upon her rank, did not fail to tell her lodgers that she was "a gentlewoman," and was mighty sharp with Becky the maid, and poor Carry, her youngest child.

For the tide of affection had turned now, and the "Misses Wellesley Macarty" were the darlings of their mother's heart, as Caroline had been in the early days of Putney prosperity. Mrs. Gann respected and loved

Digitized by Google

her elder daughters, the stately heiresses of 1,500*l.*, and scorned poor Caroline, who was likewise scorned (like Cinderella in the sweetest of all stories) by her brace of haughty, thoughtless sisters. These young women were tall, well-grown, black-browed girls, little scrupulous, fond of fun, and having great health and spirits. Caroline was pale and thin, and had fair hair and meek grey eyes; nobody thought her a beauty in her moping cotton gown; whereas the sisters, in flaunting printed muslins, with pink scarfs, and artificial flowers, and brass *ferronnières*, and other fallals, were voted very charming and genteel by the Ganns' circle of friends. They had pink cheeks, white shoulders, and many glossy curls stuck about their shining foreheads, as damp and as black as leeches. Such charms, madam, cannot fail of having their effect; and it was very lucky for Caroline that she did not possess them, for she might have been rendered as vain, frivolous, and vulgar, as these young ladies were.

While these enjoyed their pleasures and tea-parties abroad, it was Carry's usual fate to remain at home, and help the servant in the many duties which were required in Mrs. Gann's establishment. She dressed that lady and her sisters, brought her papa his tea in bed, kept the lodgers' bills, bore their scoldings if they were ladies, and sometimes gave a hand in the kitchen if any extra piecrust or cookery was required. At two she made a little toilet for dinner, and was employed on numberless household darnings and mendings in the long evenings, while her sisters giggled over the jingling piano, mamma sprawled on the sofa, and Gann was over his glass at the club. A weary lot, in sooth, was yours, poor little Caroline! since the days of your infancy, not one hour of sunshine, no friendship, no cheery playfellows, no mother's love; but that being

Digitized by Google

dead, the affections which would have crept round it, withered and died too. Only James Gann, of all the household, had a good-natured look for her, and a coarse word of kindness; nor, indeed, did Caroline complain, nor shed many tears, nor call for death, as she would if she had been brought up in genteeler circles. The poor thing did not know her own situation; her misery was dumb and patient; it is such as thousands and thousands of women in our society bear, and pine, and die of; made up of sums of small tyrannies, and long indifference, and bitter wearisome injustice, more dreadful to bear than any tortures that we of the stronger sex are pleased to cry Ah! Ah! about. In our intercourse with the world — (which is conducted with that kind of cordiality that we see in Sir Harry and my lady in a comedy — a couple of painted, grinning fools, talking parts that they have learned out of a book,) — as we sit and look at the smiling actors, we get a glimpse behind the scenes from time to time; and alas for the wretched nature that appears there! — among women especially, who deceive even more than men, having more to hide, feeling more, living more than we who have our business, pleasure, ambition, which carries us abroad. Ours are the great strokes of misfortune, as they are called, and theirs the small miseries. While the male thinks, labours, and battles without, the domestic woes and wrongs are the lot of the women; and the little ills are so bad, so infinitely fiercer and bitterer than the great, that I would not change my condition — no, not to be Helen, Queen Elizabeth, Mrs. Coutts, or the luckiest she in history.

Well, then, in the manner we have described lived the Gann family. Mr. Gann all the better for his "misfortunes," Mrs. Gann little the worse; the two young ladies greatly improved by the circumstance,

Digitized by Google

having been cast thereby into a society where their expected three thousand pounds made great heiresses of them; and poor Caroline, as luckless a being as any that the wide sun shone upon. Better to be alone in the world and utterly friendless, than to have sham friends and no sympathy; ties of kindred which bind one as it were to the corpse of relationship, and oblige one to bear through life the weight and the embraces of this lifeless, cold connection.

I do not mean to say that Caroline would ever have made use of this metaphor, or suspected that her connection with her mamma and sisters was anything so loathsome. She felt that she was ill-treated, and had no companion; but was not on that account envious, only humble and depressed, not desiring so much to resist as to bear injustice, and hardly venturing to think for herself. This tyranny and humility served her in place of education, and formed her manners, which were wonderfully gentle and calm. It was strange to see such a person growing up in such a family; the neighbours spoke of her with much scornful compassion. "A poor half-witted thing," they said, "who could not say bo! to a goose;" and I think it is one good test of gentility to be thus looked down on by vulgar people.

It is not to be supposed that the elder girls had reached their present age without receiving a number of offers of marriage, and been warmly in love a great many times. But many unfortunate occurrences had compelled them to remain in their virgin condition. There was an attorney who had proposed to Rosalind; but finding that she would receive only 750*l.* down, instead of 1,500*l.*, the monster had jilted her pitilessly, handsome as she was. An apothecary, too, had been smitten by her charms; but to live in a shop was be-

Digitized by Google

neath the dignity of a Wellesley Macarty, and she waited for better things. Lieutenant Swabber, of the coast-guard service, had lodged two months at Gann's; and if letters, long walks, and town-talk could settle a match, a match between him and Isabella must have taken place. Well, Isabella was not married; and the lieutenant, a colonel in Spain, seemed to have given up all thoughts of her. She meanwhile consoled herself with a gay young wine-merchant, who had lately established himself at Brighton, kept a gig, rode out with the hounds, and was voted perfectly genteel; and there was a certain French marquess, with the most elegant black mustachios, who had made a vast impression upon the heart of Rosalind, having met her first at the circulating library, and afterwards, by the most extraordinary series of chances, coming upon her and her sister daily in their walks upon the pier.

Meek little Caroline, meanwhile, trampled upon though she was, was springing up to womanhood; and though pale, freckled, thin, meanly dressed, had a certain charm about her which some people might prefer to the cheap splendours and rude red and white of the Misses Macarty. In fact we have now come to a period of her history when, to the amaze of her mamma and sisters, and not a little to the satisfaction of James Gann, Esquire, she actually inspired a passion in the breast of a very respectable young man.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER II

HOW MRS. GANN RECEIVED TWO LODGERS

IT was the winter season when the events recorded in this history occurred; and as at that period not one out of a thousand lodging-houses in Margate are let, Mrs. Gann, who generally submitted to occupy her own first and second floors during this cheerless season, considered herself more than ordinarily lucky when circumstances occurred which brought no less than two lodgers to her establishment.

She had to thank her daughters for the first inmate; for, as these two young ladies were walking one day down their own street, talking of the joys of the last season, and the delight of the raffles and singing at the libraries, and the intoxicating pleasures of the Vauxhall balls, they were remarked and evidently admired by a young gentleman who was sauntering listlessly up the street.

He stared, and it must be confessed that the fascinating girls stared too, and put each other's head into each other's bonnet, and giggled and said, "Lor'!" and then looked hard at the young gentleman again. Their eyes were black, their cheeks were very red. Fancy how Miss Bella's and Miss Linda's hearts beat when the gentleman, dropping his glass out of his eye, actually stepped across the street, and said, "Ladies, I am seeking for lodgings, and should be glad to look at those which I see are to be let in your house."

Digitized by Google

"How did the conjuror know it was our house?" thought Bella and Linda (they always thought in couples). From the very simple fact that Miss Bella had just thrust into the door a latch-key.

Most bitterly did Mrs. James Gann regret that she had not on her best gown when a stranger — a stranger in February — actually called to look at the lodgings. She made up, however, for the slovenliness of her dress by the dignity of her demeanour; and asked the gentleman for references, informed him that she was a gentlewoman, and that he would have peculiar advantages in her establishment; and, finally, agreed to receive him at the rate of twenty shillings per week. The bright eyes of the young ladies had done the business; but to this day Mrs. James Gann is convinced that her peculiar dignity of manner, and great fluency of brag regarding her family, have been the means of bringing hundreds of lodgers to her house, who but for her would never have visited it.

"Gents," said Mr. James Gann, at the "Bag of Nails" that very evening, "we have got a new lodger, and I'll stand glasses round to his jolly good health!"

The new lodger, who was remarkable for nothing except very black eyes, a sallow face, and a habit of smoking cigars in bed until noon, gave his name George Brandon, Esq. As to his temper and habits, when humbly requested by Mrs. Gann to pay in advance, he laughed and presented her with a bank-note, never quarrelled with a single item in her bills, walked much, and ate two mutton-chops per diem. The young ladies, who examined all the boxes and letters of the lodgers, as young ladies will, could not find one single document relative to their new inmate, except a tavern-bill of the "White Hart," to which the name of George Brandon, Esquire, was prefixed. Any other papers which might elucidate his history, were

Digitized by Google

locked up in a Bramah box, likewise marked G. B.; and though these were but unsatisfactory points by which to judge a man's character, there was a something about Mr. Brandon which caused all the ladies at Mrs. Gann's to vote he was quite a gentleman.

When this was the case, I am happy to say it would not unfrequently happen that Miss Rosalind or Miss Isabella would appear in the lodger's apartments, bearing in the breakfast-cloth, or blushingly appearing with the weekly bill, apologising for mamma's absence, "and hoping that everything was to the gentleman's liking."

Both the Misses Wellesley Macarty took occasion to visit Mr. Brandon in this manner, and he received both with such a fascinating ease and gentleman-like freedom of manner, scanning their points from head to foot, and fixing his great black eyes so earnestly on their faces, that the blushing creatures turned away abashed, and yet pleased, and had many conversations about him.

"Law, Bell," said Miss Rosalind, "what a chap that Brandon is! I don't half like him, I do declare!" Than which there can be no greater compliment from a woman to a man.

"No more do I neither," says Bell. "The man stares so, and says such things! Just now, when Becky brought his paper and sealing-wax — the silly girl brought black and red too — I took them up to ask which he would have, and what do you think he said?"

"Well, dear, what?" said Mrs. Gann.

"'Miss Bell,' says he, looking at me, and with such eyes! 'I'll keep everything: the red wax, because it's like your lips; the black wax, because it's like your hair; and the satin paper, because it's like your skin! Was n't it genteel?"

"Law, now!" exclaimed Mrs. Gann.

"Upon my word, I think it's very rude!" said Miss

Digitized by Google

Lindy; "and if he'd said so to me, I'd have slapped his face for his imperence!" And much to her credit, Miss Lindy went to his room ten minutes after to see if he *would* say anything to her. What Mr. Brandon said, I never knew; but the little pang of envy which had caused Miss Lindy to retort sharply upon her sister, had given place to a pleased good-humour, and she allowed Bella to talk about the new lodger as much as ever she liked.

And now if the reader is anxious to know what was Mr. Brandon's character, he had better read the following letter from him. It was addressed to no less a person than a viscount; and given, perhaps, with some little ostentation to Becky, the maid, to carry to the post. Now Becky, before she executed such errands, always showed the letters to her mistress or one of the young ladies (it must not be supposed that Miss Caroline was a whit less curious on these matters than her sisters); and when the family beheld the name of Lord Viscount Cinqbars upon the superscription, their respect for their lodger was greater than ever it had been: —

"MARGATE, *February*, 1835.

"MY DEAR VISCOUNT, — For a reason I have, on coming down to Margate, I with much gravity informed the people of the 'White Hart' that my name was Brandon, and intend to bear that honourable appellation during my stay. For the same reason (I am a modest man, and love to do good in secret), I left the public hotel immediately, and am now housed in private lodgings, humble, and at a humble price. I am here, thank heaven, quite alone. Robinson Crusoe had as much society in his island, as I in this of Thanet. In compensation I sleep a great deal, do nothing, and walk much, silent, by the side of the roaring sea, like Calchas, priest of Apollo.

Digitized by Google

"The fact is, that until papa's wrath is appeased, I must live with the utmost meekness and humility, and have barely enough money in my possession to pay such small current expenses as fall on me here, where strangers are many and credit does not exist. I pray you, therefore, to tell Mr. Snipson the tailor, Mr. Jackson the bootmaker, honest Solomonson the discounter of bills, and all such friends in London and Oxford as may make inquiries after me, that I am at this very moment at the city of Munich in Bavaria, from which I shall not return until my marriage with Miss Goldmore, the great Indian heiress; who, upon my honour, will have me, I believe, any day for the asking.

"Nothing else will satisfy my honoured father, I know, whose purse has already bled pretty freely for me, I must confess, and who has taken the great oath that never is broken, to bleed no more unless this marriage is brought about. Come it must. I can't work, I can't starve, and I can't live under a thousand a year.

"Here, to be sure, the charges are not enormous; for your edification, read my week's bill:—

'George Brandon, Esquire,

'To Mrs. James Gann.

	£	s.	d.
A week's lodging	1	0	0
Breakfast, cream, eggs	0	9	0
Dinner (fourteen mutton-chops) . . .	0	10	6
Fire, boot-cleaning, &c.	0	3	6
	£2	3	0

'Settled, Juliana Gann.'

"Juliana Gann! Is it not a sweet name? it sprawls over half the paper. Could you but see the owner of the name, my dear fellow! I love to examine the customs of natives of all countries, and upon my word there are some barbarians in our own less known, and more worthy of being known, than Hot-

Digitized by Google

tentots, wild Irish, Otaheiteans, or any such savages. If you could see the airs that this woman gives herself; the rouge, ribands, rings, and other female grimcracks that she wears; if you could hear her reminiscences of past times, 'when she and Mr. Gann moved in the very genteelest circles of society;' of the peerage, which she knows by heart; and of the fashionable novels, in every word of which she believes, you would be proud of your order, and admire the intense respect which the *canaille* show towards it. There never was such an old woman, not even our tutor at Christchurch.

"There is a he Gann, a vast, bloated old man, in a rough coat, who has met me once, and asked me, with a grin, if my mutton-chops was to my liking? The satirical monster! What *can* I eat in this place but mutton-chops? A great bleeding beef-steak, or a filthy, reeking *gigot à l'eau*, with a turnip poultice? I should die if I did. As for fish in a watering-place, I never touch it; it is sure to be bad. Nor care I for little sinewy, dry, black-legged fowls. Cutlets are my only resource; I have them nicely enough broiled by a little humble companion of the family, (a companion, ye gods, in *this* family!) who blushed hugely when she confessed that the cooking was hers, and that her name was Caroline. For drink I indulge in gin, of which I consume two wine-glasses daily, in two tumblers of cold water; it is the only liquor that one can be sure to find genuine in a common house in England.

"This Gann, I take it, has similar likings, for I hear him occasionally at midnight floundering up the stairs (his boots lie dirty in the passage) — floundering, I say, up the stairs, and cursing the candlestick, whence escape now and anon the snuffers and extinguisher, and with brazen rattle disturb the silence of the night. Thrice a week, at least, does Gann breakfast in bed — sure sign of pridian intoxication; and thrice a week, in the morning, I hear a hoarse voice roaring for 'my soda-water.' How long have the rogues drunk soda-water?

Digitized by Google

"At nine, Mrs. Gann and daughters are accustomed to breakfast; a handsome pair of girls, truly, and much followed, as I hear, in the quarter. These dear creatures are always paying me visits — visits with the tea-kettle, visits with the newspaper (one brings it, and one comes for it); but the one is always at the other's heels, and so one cannot show oneself to be that dear, gay seducing fellow that one has been, at home and on the Continent. Do you remember *cette chère marquise* at Pau? That cursed conjugal pistol-bullet still plays the deuce with my shoulder. Do you remember Betty Bundy, the butcher's daughter? A pretty race of fools are we to go mad after such women, and risk all — oaths, prayers, promises, long wearisome courtships — for what? — for vanity, truly. When the battle is over, behold your conquest! Betty Bundy is a vulgar country wench; and *cette belle marquise* is old, rouged, and has false hair. *Vanitas vanitatum!* what a moral man I will be some day or other!

"I have found an old acquaintance (and be hanged to him!), who has come to lodge in this very house. Do you recollect at Rome a young artist, Fitch by name, the handsome gaby with the large beard, that mad Mrs. Carrickfergus was doubly mad about? On the second floor of Mrs. Gann's house dwells this youth. His beard brings the *gamins* of the streets trooping and yelling about him; his fine braided coats have grown somewhat shabby now; and the poor fellow is, like your humble servant (by the way, have you a 500 franc billet to spare?) — like your humble servant, I say, very low in pocket. The young Andrea bears up gaily, however; twangles his guitar, paints the worse pictures in the world, and pens sonnets to his imaginary mistress's eyebrow. Luckily the rogue did not know my name, or I should have been compelled to unbosom to him; and when I called out to him, dubious as to my name, 'Don't you know me? I met you in Rome. My name is Brandon,' the painter was perfectly satisfied, and majestically bade me welcome.

"Fancy the continence of this young Joseph — he has

Digitized by Google

absolutely run away from Mrs. Carrickfergus! 'Sir,' said he, with some hesitation and blushes, when I questioned him about the widow, 'I was compelled to leave Rome in consequence of the fatal fondness of that woman. I am an 'andsome man, sir,—I know it—all the chaps in the Academy want me for a model; and that woman, sir, is sixty. Do you think I would ally myself with her; sacrifice my happiness for the sake of a creature that 's as hugly as an 'arpy? I 'd rather starve, sir. I 'd rather give up my hart and my 'opes of rising in it than do a haction so dis*hhhho*nourable.'

"There is a stock of virtue for you! and the poor fellow half-starved. He lived at Rome upon the seven portraits that the Carrickfergus ordered of him, and, as I fancy, now does not make twenty pounds in the year. O rare chastity! O wondrous silly hopes! *O motus animorum, atque O certamina tanta!—pulveris exigui jactu,* in such an insignificant little lump of mud as this! Why the deuce does not the fool marry the widow? His betters would. There was a captain of dragoons, an Italian prince, and four sons of Irish peers, all at her feet; but the Cockney's beard and whiskers have overcome them all. Here my paper has come to an end; and I have the honour to bid your lordship a respectful farewell. G. B."

Of the young gentleman who goes by the name of Brandon, the reader of the above letter will not be so misguided, we trust, as to have a very exalted opinion. The noble viscount read this document to a supper-party in Christchurch, in Oxford, and left it in a bowl of milk-punch; whence a scout abstracted it, and handed it over to us. My lord was twenty years of age when he received the epistle, and had spent a couple of years abroad, before going to the university, under the guardianship of the worthy individual who called himself George Brandon.

Mr. Brandon was the son of a half-pay colonel, of

Digitized by Google

good family, who, honouring the great himself, thought his son would vastly benefit by an acquaintance with them, and sent him to Eton, at cruel charges upon a slender purse. From Eton the lad went to Oxford, took honours there, frequented the best society, followed with a kind of proud obsequiousness all the tufts of the university, and left it owing exactly two thousand pounds. Then there came storms at home; fury on the part of the stern old "governor;" and final payment of the debt. But while this settlement was pending, Master George had contracted many more debts among bill-discounters, and was glad to fly to the Continent as tutor to young Lord Cinqbars, in whose company he learned every one of the vices in Europe; and having a good natural genius, and a heart not unkindly, had used these qualities in such an admirable manner as to be at twenty-seven utterly ruined in purse and principle — an idler, a spendthrift, and a glutton. He was free of his money; would spend his last guinea for a sensual gratification; would borrow from his neediest friend; had no kind of conscience or remorse left, but believed himself to be a good-natured devil-may-care fellow; had a good deal of wit, and indisputably good manners, and a pleasing, dashing frankness in conversation with men. I should like to know how many such scoundrels our universities have turned out; and how much ruin has been caused by that accursed system which is called in England "the education of a gentleman." Go, my son, for ten years to a public school, that "world in miniature;" learn "to fight for yourself" against the time when your real struggles shall begin. Begin to be selfish at ten years of age; study for other ten years; get a competent knowledge of boxing, swimming, rowing, and cricket, with a pretty knack of Latin hexameters and a decent smattering of Greek plays, — do this and a

Digitized by Google

fond father shall bless you — bless the two thousand pounds which he has spent in acquiring all these benefits for you. And, besides, what else have you not learned? You have been many hundreds of times to chapel, and have learned to consider the religious service performed there as the vainest parade in the world. If your father is a grocer, you have been beaten for his sake, and have learned to be ashamed of him. You have learned to forget (as how should you remember, being separated from them for three-fourths of your time?) the ties and natural affections of home. You have learned, if you have a kindly heart and an open hand, to compete with associates much more wealthy than yourself; and to consider money as not much, but honour — the honour of dining and consorting with your betters — as a great deal. All this does the public-school and college boy learn; and woe be to his knowledge! Alas, what natural tenderness and kindly clinging filial affection is he taught to trample on and despise! My friend Brandon had gone through this process of education, and had been irretrievably ruined by it — his heart and his honesty had been ruined by it, that is to say; and he had received, in return for them, a small quantity of classics and mathematics — pretty compensation for all he had lost in gaining them!

But I am wandering most absurdly from the point; right or wrong, so nature and education had formed Mr. Brandon, who is one of a considerable class. Well, this young gentleman was established at Mrs. Gann's house; and we are obliged to enter into all these explanations concerning him, because they are necessary to the right understanding of our story — Brandon not being altogether a bad man, nor much worse than many a one who goes through a course of regular selfish swindling all his life long, and dies religious, resigned, proud of

Digitized by Google

himself, and universally respected by others; for this eminent advantage has the getting-and-keeping scoundrel over the extravagant and careless one.

One day, then, as he was gazing from the window of his lodging-house, a cart, containing a vast number of easels, portfolios, wooden cases of pictures, and a small carpet-bag that might hold a change of clothes, stopped at the door. The vehicle was accompanied by a remarkable young fellow — dressed in a frock-coat covered over with frogs, a dirty turned-down shirt-collar, with a blue satin cravat, and a cap placed wonderfully on one ear — who had evidently hired apartments at Mr. Gann's. This new lodger was no other than Mr. Andrew Fitch; or, as he wrote on his cards, without the prefix,

ANDREA FITCH.

Preparations had been made at Gann's for the reception of Mr. Fitch, whose aunt (an auctioneer's lady in the town) had made arrangements that he should board and lodge with the Gann family, and have the apartments on the second floor as his private rooms. In these, then, young Andrea was installed. He was a youth of a poetic temperament, loving solitude; and where is such to be found more easily than on the storm-washed shores of Margate in winter? Then the boarding-house keepers have shut up their houses and gone away in anguish; then the taverns take their carpets up, and you can have your choice of a hundred and twenty beds in any one of them; then but one dismal waiter remains to superintend this vast echoing pile of loneliness, and the landlord pines for summer; then the flys

Digitized by Google

for Ramsgate stand tenantless beside the pier; and about four sailors, in pea-jackets, are to be seen in the three principal streets; in the rest, silence, closed shutters, torpid chimneys enjoying their unnatural winter sinecure — not the clack of a patten echoing over the cold dry flags!

This solitude had been chosen by Mr. Brandon for good reasons of his own; Gann and his family would have fled, but that they had no other house wherein to take refuge; and Mrs. Hammerton, the auctioneer's lady, felt so keenly the kindness which she was doing to Mrs. Gann, in providing her with a lodger at such a period, that she considered herself fully justified in extracting from the latter a bonus of two guineas, threatening on refusal to send her darling nephew to a rival establishment over the way.

Andrea was here then, in the loneliness that he loved, — a fantastic youth, who lived but for his art; to whom the world was like the Coburg Theatre, and he in a magnificent costume acting a principal part. His art, and his beard and whiskers, were the darlings of his heart. His long pale hair fell over a high polished brow, which looked wonderfully thoughtful; and yet no man was more guiltless of thinking. He was always putting himself into attitudes; he never spoke the truth; and was so entirely affected and absurd, as to be quite honest at last: for it is my belief that the man did not know truth from falsehood any longer, and was when he was alone, when he was in company, nay, when he was unconscious and sound asleep snoring in bed, one complete lump of affectation. When his apartments on the second floor were arranged according to his fancy, they made a tremendous show. He had a large Gothic chest, in which he put his wardrobe (namely, two velvet waistcoats, four varied satin under ditto, two pairs

Digitized by Google

braided trousers, two shirts, half-a-dozen false collars, and a couple of pairs of dreadfully dilapidated Blucher boots). He had some pieces of armour; some China jugs and Venetian glasses; some bits of old damask rags, to drape his doors and windows: and a rickety lay figure, in a Spanish hat and cloak, over which slung a long Toledo rapier, and a guitar, with a riband of dirty sky-blue.

Such was our poor fellow's stock in trade. He had some volumes of poems—"Lalla Rookh," and the sterner compositions of Byron; for, to do him justice, he hated "Don Juan," and a woman was in his eyes an angel; a *h*angel, alas! he would call her, for nature and the circumstances of his family had taken sad Cockney advantages over Andrea's pronunciation.

The Misses Wellesley Macarty were not, however, very squeamish with regard to grammar, and, in this dull season, voted Mr. Fitch an elegant young fellow. His immense beard and whiskers gave them the highest opinion of his genius; and before long the intimacy between the young people was considerable, for Mr. Fitch insisted upon drawing the portraits of the whole family. He painted Mrs. Gann in her rouge and ribands, as described by Mr. Brandon; Mr. Gann, who said that his picture would be very useful to the artist, as every soul in Margate knew him; and the Misses Macarty (a neat group, representing Miss Bella embracing Miss Linda, who was pointing to a pianoforte).

"I suppose you 'll do my Carry next?" said Mr. Gann, expressing his approbation of the last picture.

"Law, sir," said Miss Linda, "Carry, with her red hair!—it would be *ojus*."

"Mr. Fitch might as well paint Becky, our maid," said Miss Bella.

"Carry is quite impossible, Gann," said Mrs. Gann;

Digitized by Google

"she has n't a gown fit to be seen in. She 's not been at church for thirteen Sundays in consequence."

"And more shame for you, ma'am," said Mr. Gann, who liked his child; "Carry *shall* have a gown, and the best of gowns." And jingling three and twenty shillings in his pocket, Mr. Gann determined to spend them all in the purchase of a robe for Carry. But alas, the gown never came; half the money was spent that very evening at the "Bag of Nails."

"Is that — that young lady, your daughter?" said Mr. Fitch, surprised, for he fancied Carry was a humble companion of the family.

"Yes, she is, and a very good daughter, too, sir," answered Mr. Gann. "*Fetch* and Carry I call her, or else Carryvan — she 's so useful. Ain't you, Carry?"

"I 'm very glad if I am, papa," said the young lady, who was blushing violently, and in whose presence all this conversation had been carried on.

"Hold your tongue, miss," said her mother; "you are very expensive to us, that you are, and need not brag about the work you do. You would not live on charity, would you, like some folks?" (here she looked fiercely at Mr. Gann); "and if your sisters and me starve to keep you and some folks, I presume you are bound to make us some return."

When any allusion was made to Mr. Gann's idleness and extravagance, or his lady showed herself in any way inclined to be angry, it was honest James's habit not to answer, but to take his hat and walk abroad to the public-house; or if haply she scolded him at night, he would turn his back and fall a-snoring. These were the only remedies he found for Mrs. James's bad temper, and the first of them he adopted on hearing these words of his lady, which we have just now transcribed.

Poor Caroline had not her father's refuge of flight, but

Digitized by Google

was obliged to stay and listen; and a wondrous eloquence, God wot! had Mrs. Gann upon the subject of her daughter's ill-conduct. The first lecture Mr. Fitch heard, he set down Caroline for a monster. Was she not idle, sulky, scornful, and a sloven? For these and many more of her daughter's vices Mrs. Gann vouched, declaring that Caroline's misbehaviour was hastening her own death, and finishing by a fainting-fit. In the presence of all these charges, there stood Miss Caroline, dumb, stupid, and careless; nay, when the fainting-fit came on, and Mrs. Gann fell back on the sofa, the unfeeling girl took the opportunity to retire, and never offered to smack her mamma's hands, to give her the smelling-bottle, or to restore her with a glass of water.

One stood close at hand; for Mr. Fitch, when this first fit occurred, was sitting in the Gann parlour, painting that lady's portrait; and he was making towards her with his tumbler, when Miss Linda cried out, "Stop! the water's full of paint;" and straightway burst out laughing. Mrs. Gann jumped up at this, cured suddenly, and left the room, looking somewhat foolish.

"You don't know Ma," said Miss Linda, still giggling; "she's always fainting."

"Poor thing!" cried Fitch; "very nervous, I suppose?"

"Oh, very!" answered the lady, exchanging arch glances with Miss Bella.

"Poor dear lady!" continued the artist; "I pity her from my hinmost soul. Does n't the himmortal bard of Havon observe, how sharper than a serpent's tooth it is to have a thankless child? And is it true, ma'am, that that young woman has been the ruin of her family?"

"Ruin of her fiddlestick!" replied Miss Bella. "Law, Mr. Fitch, you don't know Ma yet; she is in one of her tantrums."

Digitized by Google

"What, then, it *isn't* true?" cried simple-minded Fitch. To which neither of the young ladies made any answer in words, nor could the little artist comprehend why they looked at each other, and burst out laughing. But he retired pondering on what he had seen and heard; and being a very soft young fellow, most implicitly believed the accusations of poor dear Mrs Gann, and thought her daughter Caroline was no better than a Regan or Goneril.

A time, however, was to come when he should believe her to be a most pure and gentle Cordelia; and of this change in Fitch's opinions we shall speak in Chapter III.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER III

A SHABBY GENTEEL DINNER, AND OTHER INCIDENTS OF A LIKE NATURE

MR. BRANDON'S letter to Lord Cinqbars produced, as we have said, a great impression upon the family of Gann; an impression which was considerably increased by their lodger's subsequent behaviour: for although the persons with whom he now associated were of a very vulgar, ridiculous kind, they were by no means so low or ridiculous that Mr. Brandon should not wish to appear before them in the most advantageous light; and, accordingly, he gave himself the greatest airs when in their company, and bragged incessantly of his acquaintance and familiarity with the nobility. Mr. Brandon was a tuft-hunter of the genteel sort; his pride being quite as slavish, and his haughtiness as mean and cringing, in fact, as poor Mrs. Gann's stupid wonder and respect for all the persons whose names are written with titles before them. O free and happy Britons, what a miserable, truckling, cringing race ye are!

The reader has no doubt encountered a number of such swaggerers in the course of his conversation with the world — men of a decent middle rank, who affect to despise it, and herd only with persons of the fashion. This is an offence in a man which none of us can forgive; we call him tuft-hunter, lickspittle, sneak, unmanly; we hate, and profess to despise him. I fear it

Digitized by Google

is no such thing. We envy Lickspittle, that is the fact; and therefore hate him. Were he to plague us with the stories of Jones and Brown, our familiars, the man would be a simple bore, his stories heard patiently; but so soon as he talks of my lord or the duke, we are in arms against him. I have seen a whole merry party in Russell Square grow suddenly gloomy and dumb, because a pert barrister, in a loud, shrill voice, told a story of Lord This or the Marquis of That. We all hated that man; and I would lay a wager that every one of the fourteen persons assembled round the boiled turkey and saddle of mutton (not to mention side-dishes from the pastrycook's opposite the British Museum) — I would wager, I say, that every one was muttering inwardly, "A plague on that fellow! he knows a lord, and I never spoke to more than three in the whole course of my life." To our betters we can reconcile ourselves, if you please, respecting them very sincerely, laughing at their jokes, making allowance for their stupidities, meekly suffering their insolence; but we can't pardon our equals going beyond us. A friend of mine who lived amicably and happily among his friends and relatives at Hackney, was on a sudden disowned by the latter, cut by the former, and doomed in innumerable prophecies to ruin, because he kept a footboy, — a harmless little blowsy-faced urchin, in light snuff-coloured clothes, glistering over with sugar-loaf buttons. There is another man, a great man, a literary man, whom the public loves, and who took a sudden leap from obscurity into fame and wealth. This was a crime; but he bore his rise with so much modesty, that even his brethren of the pen did not envy him. One luckless day he set up a one-horse chaise; from that minute he was doomed.

"Have you seen his new carriage?" says Snarley.

Digitized by Google

"Yes," says Yow; "he's so consumedly proud of it, that he can't see his old friends while he drives."

"Ith it a donkey-cart," lisps Simper, "thith gwand cawwaige? I always thaid that the man, from hith thtile, wath fitted to be a vewy dethent cothtermonger."

"Yes, yes," cries old Candour, "a sad pity indeed! — dreadfully extravagant, I'm told — bad health — expensive family — works going down every day — and now he must set up a carriage forsooth!"

Snarley, Yow, Simper, Candour, hate their brother. If he is ruined, they will be kind to him and just; but he is successful, and woe be to him!

. . . . . .

This trifling digression of half a page or so, although it seems to have nothing to do with the story in hand, has, nevertheless, the strongest relation to it; and you shall hear what.

In one word, then, Mr. Brandon bragged so much, and assumed such airs of superiority, that after a while he perfectly disgusted Mrs. Gann and the Misses Macarty, who were gentlefolks themselves, and did not at all like his way of telling them that he was their better. Mr. Fitch was swallowed up in his hart as he called it, and cared nothing for Brandon's airs. Gann, being a low-spirited fellow, completely submitted to Mr. Brandon, and looked up to him with deepest wonder. And poor little Caroline followed her father's faith, and in six weeks after Mr. Brandon's arrival at the lodgings had grown to believe him the most perfect, finished, polished, agreeable of mankind. Indeed, the poor girl had never seen a gentleman before, and towards such her gentle heart turned instinctively. Brandon never offended her by hard words; insulted her by cruel scorn, such as she met with from her mother and her sisters; there was a quiet manner about

Digitized by Google

the man quite different to any that she had before seen amongst the acquaintances of her family; and if he assumed a tone of superiority in his conversation with her and the rest, Caroline felt that he *was* their superior, and as such admired and respected him.

What happens when in the innocent bosom of a girl of sixteen such sensations arise? What has happened ever since the world began?

I have said that Miss Caroline had no friend in the world but her father, and must here take leave to recall that assertion; — a friend she most certainly had, and that was honest Becky, the smutty maid, whose name has been mentioned before. Miss Caroline had learned, in the course of a life spent under the tyranny of her mamma, some of the notions of the latter, and would have been very much offended to call Becky her friend: but friends, in fact, they were; and a great comfort it was for Caroline to descend to the calm kitchen from the stormy back-parlour, and there vent some of her little woes to the compassionate servant of all work.

When Mrs. Gann went out with her daughters, Becky would take her work and come and keep Miss Caroline company; and if the truth must be told, the greatest enjoyment the pair used to have was in these afternoons, when they read together out of the precious greasy, marble-covered volumes that Mrs. Gann was in the habit of fetching from the library. Many and many a tale had the pair so gone through. I can see them over "Manfrone; or the One-handed Monk" — the room dark, the street silent, the hour ten — the tall, red, lurid candlewick waggling down, the flame flickering pale upon Miss Caroline's pale face as she read out, and lighting up honest Becky's goggling eyes, who sat silent, her work in her lap: she had not done a stitch of it for an hour. As the trap-door slowly opens, and

Digitized by Google

the scowling Alonzo, bending over the sleeping Imoinda, draws his pistol, cocks it, looks well if the priming be right, places it then to the sleeper's ear, and—*thunder-under-under*—down fall the snuffers! Becky has had them in her hand for ten minutes, afraid to use them. Up starts Caroline, and flings the book back into her mamma's basket. It is that lady returned with her daughters from a tea-party, where two young gents from London have been mighty genteel indeed.

For the sentimental, too, as well as for the terrible, Miss Caroline and the cook had a strong predilection, and had wept their poor eyes out over "Thaddeus of Warsaw" and the "Scottish Chiefs." Fortified by the examples drawn from those instructive volumes, Becky was firmly convinced that her young mistress would meet with a great lord some day or other, or be carried off, like Cinderella, by a brilliant prince, to the mortification of her elder sisters, whom Becky hated. And when, therefore, the new lodger came, lonely, mysterious, melancholy, elegant, with the romantic name of George Brandon—when he wrote a letter directed to a lord, and Miss Caroline and Becky together examined the superscription, such a look passed between them as the pencil of Leslie or Maclise could alone describe for us. Becky's orbs were lighted up with a preternatural look of wondering wisdom; whereas, after an instant, Caroline dropped hers, and blushed, and said, "Nonsense, Becky!"

"*Is* it nonsense?" said Becky, grinning and snapping her fingers with a triumphant air; "the cards comes true; I knew they would. Did n't you have king and queen of hearts three deals running? What did you dream about last Tuesday, tell me that?"

But Miss Caroline never did tell, for her sisters came bouncing down the stairs, and examined the lodger's

Digitized by Google

letter. Caroline, however, went away musing much upon these points; and she began to think Mr. Brandon more wonderful and beautiful every day.

In the meantime, while Miss Caroline was innocently indulging in her inclination for the brilliant occupier of the first floor, it came to pass that the tenant of the second was inflamed by a most romantic passion for her.

For, after partaking for about a fortnight of the family dinner, and passing some evenings with Mrs. Gann and the young ladies, Mr. Fitch, though by no means quick of comprehension, began to perceive that the nightly charges that were brought against poor Caroline could not be founded upon truth. "Let 's see," mused he to himself. "Tuesday, the old lady said her daughter was bringing her grey hairs with sorrow to the grave, because the cook had not boiled the potatoes. Wednesday, she said Caroline was an assassin, because she could not find her own thimble. Thursday, she vows Caroline has no religion, because that old pair of silk stockings were not darned. And this can't be," reasoned Fitch, deeply. "A gal haint a murderess because her Ma can't find her thimble. A woman that goes to slap her grown-up daughter on the back, and before company too, for such a paltry thing as a hold pair of stockings, can't be surely a-speaking the truth." And thus gradually his first impression against Caroline wore away. As this disappeared, pity took possession of his soul — and we know what pity is akin to; and, at the same time, a corresponding hatred for the oppressors of a creature so amiable.

To sum up, in six short weeks after the appearance of the two gentlemen, we find our chief *dramatis personæ* as follows:

Digitized by Google

CAROLINE, an innocent young woman, in love with BRANDON.
FITCH, a celebrated painter, almost in love with CAROLINE.
BRANDON, a young gentleman, in love with himself.

At first he was pretty constant in his attendance upon the Misses Macarty when they went out to walk, nor were they displeased at his attentions; but he found that there were a great number of Margate beaux — ugly, vulgar fellows as ever were — who always followed in the young ladies' train, and made themselves infinitely more agreeable than he was. These men Mr. Brandon treated with a great deal of scorn: and, in return, they hated him cordially. So did the ladies speedily: his haughty manners, though quite as impertinent and free, were not half so pleasant to them as Jones's jokes or Smith's charming romps; and the girls gave Brandon very shortly to understand that they were much happier without him. "Ladies, your humble," he heard Bob Smith say, as that little linendraper came skipping to the door from which they were issuing. "The sun's hup and trade is down; if you're for a walk, I'm your man." And Miss Linda and Miss Bella each took an arm of Mr. Smith, and sailed down the street. "I'm glad you ain't got that proud gent with the glass hi," said Mr. Smith; "he's the most hillbred, supercilious beast I ever see."

"So he is," says Bella.

"Hush!" says Linda.

The "proud gent with the glass hi" was at this moment lolling out of the first-floor window, smoking his accustomed cigar; and his eyeglass was fixed upon the ladies, to whom he made a very low bow. It may be imagined how fond he was of them afterwards, and what looks he cast at Mr. Bob Smith the next time he met him. Mr. Bob's heart beat for a day afterwards; and he found he had business in town.

Digitized by Google

But the love of society is stronger than even pride; and the great Mr. Brandon was sometimes fain to descend from his high station and consort with the vulgar family with whom he lodged. But, as we have said, he always did this with a wonderfully condescending air, giving his associates to understand how great was the honour he did them.

One day, then, he was absolutely so kind as to accept of an invitation from the ground-floor, which was delivered in the passage by Mr. James Gann, who said, "It was hard to see a gent eating mutton-chops from week's end to week's end; and if Mr. Brandon had a mind to meet a devilish good fellow as ever was, my friend Swigby, a man who rides his horse, and has his five hundred a year to spend, and to eat a prime cut out of as good a leg of pork (though he said it) as ever a knife was stuck into, they should dine that day at three o'clock sharp, and Mrs. G. and the gals would be glad of the honour of his company.

The person so invited was rather amused at the terms in which Mr. Gann conveyed his hospitable message; and at three o'clock made his appearance in the back-parlour, whence he had the honour of conducting Mrs. Gann (dressed in a sweet yellow *mousseline de laine*, with a large red turban, a *ferronnière*, and a smelling-bottle attached by a ring to a very damp, fat hand) to the "office," where the repast was set out. The Misses Macarty were in costumes equally tasty: one on the guest's right hand; one near the boarder, Mr. Fitch — who, in a large beard, an amethyst velvet-waistcoat, his hair fresh wetted, and parted accurately down the middle to fall in curls over his collar, would have been irresistible if the collar had been a little, little whiter than it was.

Mr. Brandon, too, was dressed in his very best suit;

Digitized by Google

for though he affected to despise his hosts very much, he wished to make the most favourable impression upon them, and took care to tell Mrs. Gann that he and Lord So-and-so were the only two men in the world who were in possession of that particular waistcoat which she admired: for Mrs. Gann was very gracious, and had admired the waistcoat, being desirous to impress with awe Mr. Gann's friend and admirer, Mr. Swigby — who, man of fortune as he was, was a constant frequenter of the club at the "Bag of Nails."

About this club and its supporters Mr. Gann's guest, Mr. Swigby, and Gann himself, talked very gaily before dinner; all the jokes about all the club being roared over by the pair.

Mr. Brandon, who felt he was the great man of the party, indulged himself in his great propensities without restraint, and told Mrs. Gann stories about half the nobility. Mrs. Gann conversed knowingly about the Opera; and declared that she thought Taglioni the sweetest singer in the world.

"Mr. — a — Swigby, have you ever seen Lablache dance?" asked Mr. Brandon of that gentleman, to whom he had been formally introduced.

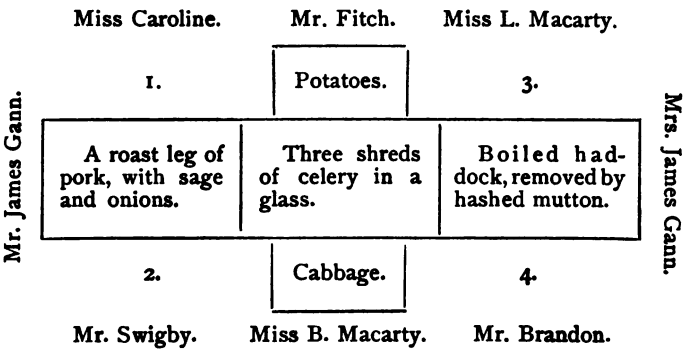
"At Vauxhall is he?" said Mr. Swigby, who was just from town.

"Yes, on the tight-rope; a charming performer."

On which Mr. Gann told how he had been to Vauxhall when the princes were in London; and his lady talked of these knowingly. And then they fell to conversing about fireworks and rack-punch; Mr. Brandon assuring the young ladies that Vauxhall was the very pink of the fashion, and longing to have the honour of dancing a quadrille with them there. Indeed, Brandon was so very sarcastic, that not a single soul at table understood him.

Digitized by Google

The table, from Mr. Brandon's plan of it, which was afterwards sent to my Lord Cinqbars, was arranged as follows: —



1 and 2 are pots of porter; 3, a quart of ale, Mrs. Gann's favourite drink; 4, a bottle of fine old golden sherry, the real produce of the Uva grape, purchased at the "Bag of Nails" Hotel for 1*s.* 9*d.* by Mr. J. Gann.

Mr. Gann. "Taste that sherry, sir. Your 'ealth, and my services to you, sir. That wine, sir, is given me as a particular favour by my — ahem! — my wine-merchant, who only will part with a small quantity of it, and imports it direct, sir, from — ahem! — from ——"

Mr. Brandon. "From Xeres, of course. It is, I really think, the finest wine I ever tasted in my life — at a commoner's table, that is."

Mrs. Gann. "Oh, in course, a commoner's table! — we have no titles, sir, (Mr. Gann, I will trouble you for some more crackling,) though my poor dear girls are related, by their blessed father's side, to some of the first nobility in the land, I assure you."

Mr. Gann. "Gammon, Jooly my dear. Them Irish

Digitized by Google

nobility, you know, what are they? And besides, it's my belief that the gals are no more related to them than I am."

Miss Bella (*to Mr. Brandon, confidentially*). "You must find that poor Par is sadly vulgar, Mr. Brandon."

Mrs. Gann. "Mr. Brandon has never been accustomed to such language, I am sure; and I entreat you will excuse Mr. Gann's rudeness, sir."

Miss Linda. "Indeed, I assure you, Mr. Brandon, that we 've high connections as well as low; as high as some people's connections, per'aps, though we are not always talking of the nobility." This was a double shot: the first barrel of Miss Linda's sentence hit her stepfather, the second part was levelled directly at Mr. Brandon. "Don't you think I 'm right, Mr. Fitch?"

Mr. Brandon. "You are quite right, Miss Linda, in this as in every other instance; but I am afraid Mr. Fitch has not paid proper attention to your excellent remark: for, if I don't mistake the meaning of that beautiful design which he has made with his fork upon the tablecloth, his soul is at this moment wrapped up in his art."

This was exactly what Mr. Fitch wished that all the world should suppose. He flung back his hair, and stared wildly for a moment, and said, "Pardon me, madam: it is true my thoughts were at that moment far away in the regions of my hart." He was really thinking that his attitude was a very elegant one, and that a large garnet ring which he wore on his forefinger must be mistaken by all the company for a ruby.

"Art is very well," said Mr. Brandon; "but with such pretty natural objects before you, I wonder you were not content to think of them."

"Do you mean the mashed potatoes, sir?" said Andrea Fitch, wondering.

Digitized by Google

"I mean Miss Rosalind Macarty," answered Brandon, gallantly, and laughing heartily at the painter's simplicity. But this compliment could not soften Miss Linda, who had an uneasy conviction that Mr. Brandon was laughing at her, and disliked him accordingly.

At this juncture, Miss Caroline entered and took the place marked as hers, to the left hand of Mr. Gann, vacant. An old rickety wooden stool was placed for her, instead of that elegant and commodious Windsor chair which supported every other person at table; and by the side of the plate stood a curious old battered tin mug, on which the antiquarian might possibly discover the inscription of the word "Caroline." This, in truth, was poor Caroline's mug and stool, having been appropriated to her from childhood upwards; and here it was her custom meekly to sit, and eat her daily meal.

It was well that the girl was placed near her father, else I do believe she would have been starved; but Gann was much too good-natured to allow that any difference should be made between her and her sisters. There are some meannesses which are too mean even for man — woman, lovely woman alone, can venture to commit them. Well, on the present occasion, and when the dinner was half over, poor Caroline stole gently into the room and took her ordinary place. Caroline's pale face was very red; for the fact must be told that she had been in the kitchen helping Becky, the universal maid; and having heard how the great Mr. Brandon was to dine with them upon that day, the simple girl had been showing her respect for him, by compiling, in her best manner, a certain dish, for the cooking of which her papa had often praised her. She took her place, blushing violently when she saw him, and if Mr. Gann had not been making a violent clattering with his knife and fork, it is possible that he might have heard Miss

Digitized by Google

Caroline's heart thump, which it did violently. Her dress was somehow a little smarter than usual; and Becky the maid, who brought in that remove of hashed mutton which has been set down in the bill of fare, looked at her young lady with a good deal of complacency, as, loaded with plates, she quitted the room. Indeed, the poor girl deserved to be looked at: there was an air of gentleness and innocence about her that was apt to please some persons, much more than the bold beauties of her sisters. The two young men did not fail to remark this; one of them, the little painter, had long since observed it.

"You are very late, miss," cried Mrs. Gann, who affected not to know what had caused her daughter's delay. "You 're always late!" and the elder girls stared and grinned at each other knowingly, as they always did when mamma made such attacks upon Caroline, who only kept her eyes down upon the tablecloth, and began to eat her dinner without saying a word.

"Come, my dear," cried honest Gann, "if she is late you know why. A girl can't be here and there too, as I say; can they, Swigby?"

"Impossible!" said Swigby.

"Gents," continued Mr. Gann, "our Carry, you must know, has been downstairs, making the pudding for her old pappy; and a good pudding she makes, I can tell you."

Miss Caroline blushed more vehemently than ever; the artist stared her full in the face; Mrs. Gann said, "Nonsense" and "stuff," very majestically; only Mr. Brandon interposed in Caroline's favour.

"I would sooner that my wife should know how to make a pudding," said he, "than how to play the best piece of music in the world!"

"Law, Mr. Brandon! I, for my part, would n't de-

Digitized by Google

mean myself by any such kitchen-work!" cries Miss Linda.

"Make puddens, indeed; it's ojous!" cries Bella.

"For you, my loves, of course!" interposed their mamma. "Young women of your family and circumstances is not expected to perform any such work. It's different with Miss Caroline, who, if she does make herself useful now and then, don't make herself near so useful as she should, considering that she's not a shilling, and is living on our charity, like some other folks."

Thus did this amiable woman neglect no opportunity to give her opinions about her husband and daughter. The former, however, cared not a straw; and the latter, in this instance, was perfectly happy. Had not kind Mr. Brandon approved of her work; and could she ask for more?

"Mamma may say what she pleases to-day," thought Caroline. "I am too happy to be made angry by her."

Poor little mistaken Caroline, to think you were safe against three women! The dinner had not advanced much further, when Miss Isabella, who had been examining her younger sister curiously for some short time, telegraphed Miss Linda across the table, and nodded, and winked, and pointed to her own neck; a very white one, as I have before had the honour to remark, and quite without any covering, except a smart necklace of twenty-four rows of the lightest blue glass beads, finishing in a neat tassel. Linda had a similar ornament of a vermilion colour; whereas Caroline, on this occasion, wore a handsome new collar up to the throat, and a brooch, which looked all the smarter for the shabby frock over which they were placed. As soon as she saw her sister's signals, the poor little thing, who had only just done fluttering and blushing, fell to this same work over again. Down went her eyes once more, and her face

Digitized by Google

and neck lighted up to the colour of Miss Linda's sham cornelian.

"What's the gals giggling and ogling about?" said Mr. Gann, innocently.

"What is it, my darling loves?" said stately Mrs. Gann.

"Why, don't you see, Ma?" said Linda. "Look at Miss Carry! I'm blessed if *she has not got on Becky's collar and brooch* that Sims the pilot gave her!"

The young ladies fell back in uproarious fits of laughter, and laughed all the time that their mamma was thundering out a speech, in which she declared that her daughter's conduct was unworthy a gentlewoman, and bid her leave the room and take off those disgraceful ornaments.

There was no need to tell her; the poor little thing gave one piteous look at her father, who was whistling, and seemed indeed to think the matter a good joke; and after she had managed to open the door and totter into the passage, you might have heard her weeping there, weeping tears more bitter than any of the many she had shed in the course of her life. Down she went to the kitchen, and when she reached that humble place of refuge, first pulled at her neck and made as if she would take off Becky's collar and brooch, and then flung herself into the arms of that honest scullion, where she cried and cried till she brought on the first fit of hysterics that ever she had had.

This crying could not at first be heard in the parlour, where the young ladies, Mrs. Gann, Mr. Gann, and his friend from the "Bag of Nails" were roaring at the excellence of the joke. Mr. Brandon, sipping sherry, sat by, looking very sarcastically and slyly from one party to the other; Mr. Fitch was staring about him too, but with a very different expression, anger and wonder

Digitized by Google

inflaming his bearded contenance. At last, as the laughing died away and a faint voice of weeping came from the kitchen below, Andrew could bear it no longer, but bounced up from his chair and rushed out of the room exclaiming,—

"By Jove, it's too bad!"

"What does the man mean?" said Mrs. Gann.

He meant that he was from that moment over head and ears in love with Caroline, and that he longed to beat, buffet, pummel, thump, tear to pieces, those callous ruffians who so pitilessly laughed at her.

"What's that chop wi' the beard in such tantrums about?" said the gentleman from the "Bag of Nails."

Mr. Gann answered this query by some joke, intimating that "per'aps Mr. Fitch's dinner did not agree with him," at which these worthies roared again.

The young ladies said, "Well, now, upon my word!"

"Mighty genteel behaviour truly!" cried mamma; "but what can you expect from the poor thing?"

Brandon only sipped more sherry, but he looked at Fitch as the latter flung out of the room, and his countenance was lighted up by a more unequivocal smile.

. . . . . .

These two little adventures were followed by a silence of some few minutes, during which the meats remained on the table, and no signs were shown of that pudding upon which poor Caroline had exhausted her skill. The absence of this delicious part of the repast was first remarked by Mr. Gann; and his lady, after jangling at the bell for some time in vain, at last begged one of her daughters to go and hasten matters.

"BECKY!" shrieked Miss Linda from the hall, but Becky replied not. "Becky, are we to be kept waiting all day?" continued the lady in the same shrill voice. "Mamma wants the pudding!"

Digitized by Google

"TELL HER TO FETCH IT HERSELF!" roared Becky, at which remark Gann and his facetious friend once more went off into fits of laughter.

"This is too bad!" said Mrs. G., starting up; "she shall leave the house this instant!" and so no doubt Becky would, but that the lady owed her five quarters' wages; which she, at that period, did not feel inclined to pay.

Well, the dinner at last was at an end; the ladies went away to tea, leaving the gentlemen to their wine; Brandon, very condescendingly, partaking of a bottle of port, and listening with admiration to the toasts and sentiments with which it is still the custom among persons of Mr. Gann's rank of life to preface each glass of wine. As thus: —

Glass 1. "Gents," says Mr. Gann, rising, "this glass I need say nothink about. Here's the king, and long life to him and the family!"

Mr. Swigby, with his glass, goes knock, knock, knock on the table; and saying gravely, "The king!" drinks off his glass, and smacks his lips afterwards.

Mr. Brandon, who had drank half his, stops in the midst and says, "Oh, 'the king!'"

Mr. Swigby. "A good glass of wine that, Gann my boy!"

Mr. Brandon. "Capital, really; though, upon my faith, I'm no judge of port."

Mr. Gann (smacks). "A fine fruity wine as ever I tasted. I suppose you, Mr. B., are accustomed only to claret. I've 'ad it, too, in my time, sir, as Swigby there very well knows. I travelled, sir, *sure le Continong*, I assure you, and drank my glass of claret with the best man in France, or England either. I was n't always what I am, sir."

Mr. Brandon. "You don't look as if you were."

Digitized by Google

Mr. Gann. "No, sir. Before that —— gas came in, I was head, sir, of one of the fust 'ouses in the hoil-trade, Gann, Blubbery & Gann, sir — Thames Street, City. I 'd my box at Putney, as good a gig and horse as my friend there drives."

Mr. Swigby. "Ay, and a better too, Gann, I make no doubt."

Mr. Gann. "Well, *say* a better. I *had* a better, if money could fetch it, sir; and I did n't spare that, I warrant you. No, no, James Gann did n't grudge his purse, sir; and had his friends around him, as he 's 'appy to 'ave now, sir. Mr. Brandon, your 'ealth, sir, and may we hoften meet under this ma'ogany. Swigby my boy, God bless you!"

Mr. Brandon. "Your very good health."

Mr. Swigby. "Thank you, Gann. Here 's to you, and long life and prosperity and happiness to you and yours. Bless you, Jim my boy; heaven bless you! I say this, Mr. Bandon — Brandon — what 's your name — there ain't a better fellow in all Margate than James Gann, — no, nor in all England. Here 's Mrs. Gann, gents, and the family. MRS. GANN!" (*drinks.*)

Mr. Brandon. "MRS. GANN. Hip, hip, hurrah!" (*drinks.*)

Mr. Gann. "Mrs. Gann, and thank you, gents. A fine woman, Mr. B.; ain't she now? Ah, if you 'd seen 'er when I married her! Gad, she *was* fine then — an out and outer, sir! *Such* a figure!"

Mr. Swigby. "You 'd choose none but a good 'un, I war'nt. Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Gann. "Did I ever tell you of my duel along with the regimental doctor? No! Then I will. I was a young chap, you see, in those days; and when I saw her at Brussels — (*Brusell*, they call it) — I was right slick up over head and ears in love with her at once.

Digitized by Google

But what was to be done? There was another gent in the case — a regimental doctor, sir — a reg'lar dragon. 'Faint heart,' says I, 'never won a fair lady,' and so I made so bold. She took me, sent the doctor to the right about. I met him one morning in the park at Brussels, and stood to him, sir, like a man. When the affair was over, my second, a leftenant of dragoons, told me, 'Gann,' says he, 'I 've seen many a man under fire — I 'm a Waterloo man,' says he, — 'and have rode by Wellington many a long day; but I never, for coolness, see such a man as you.' Gents, here 's the Duke of Wellington and the British army!" (*the gents drink.*)

Mr. Brandon. "Did you kill the doctor, sir?"

Mr. Gann. "Why, no, sir; I shot in the hair."

Mr. Brandon. "Shot him in the hair! Egad, that was a severe shot, and a very lucky escape the doctor had of it? Whereabout in the hair? a whisker, sir; or, perhaps, a pig-tail?"

Mr. Swigby. "Haw, haw, haw! shot'n in the *hair* — capital, capital!"

Mr. Gann, who has grown very red. "No, sir, there may be some mistake in my pronounciation, which I did n't expect to have laughed at, at my hown table."

Mr. Brandon. "My dear sir! I protest and vow——"

Mr. Gann. "Never mind it, sir. I gave you my best, and did my best to make you welcome. If you like better to make fun of me, do, sir. That may be the *genteel* way, but hang me if it 's *hour* way; is it, Jack? *Our* way; I beg your pardon, sir."

Mr. Swigby. "Jim, Jim! for heaven's sake! — peace and harmony of the evening — conviviality — social enjoyment — did n't mean it — did you mean anything, Mr. What-d'-ye-call-'im?"

Digitized by Google

Mr. Brandon. "Nothing, upon my honour as a gentleman!"

Mr. Gann. "Well, then, there's my hand!" and good-natured Gann tried to forget the insult, and to talk as if nothing had occurred: but he had been wounded in the most sensitive point in which a man can be touched by his superior, and never forgot Brandon's joke. That night at the club, when dreadfully tipsy, he made several speeches on the subject, and burst into tears many times. The pleasure of the evening was quite spoiled; and, as the conversation became rapid and dull, we shall refrain from reporting it. Mr. Brandon speedily took leave, but had not the courage to face the ladies at tea; to whom, it appears, the reconciled Becky had brought that refreshing beverage.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER IV

IN WHICH MR. FITCH PROCLAIMS HIS LOVE, AND MR. BRANDON PREPARES FOR WAR

FROM the splendid hall in which Mrs. Gann was dispensing her hospitality, the celebrated painter, Andrea Fitch, rushed forth in a state of mind even more delirious than that which he usually enjoyed He looked abroad into the street: all there was dusk and lonely; the rain falling heavily, the wind playing Pandean pipes and whistling down the chimney-pots. "I love the storm," said Fitch, solemnly; and he put his great Spanish cloak round him in the most approved manner (it was of so prodigious a size that the tail of it, as it twirled over his shoulder, whisked away a lodging-card from the door of the house opposite Mr. Gann's). "I love the storm and solitude," said he, lighting a large pipe filled full of the fragrant Oronooko; and thus armed, he passed rapidly down the street, his hat cocked over his ringlets.

Andrea did not like smoking, but he used a pipe as a part of his profession as an artist, and as one of the picturesque parts of his costume; in like manner, though he did not fence, he always travelled about with a pair of foils; and quite unconscious of music, nevertheless had a guitar constantly near at hand. Without such properties a painter's spectacle is not complete; and now he determined to add to them another indispensable requisite — a mistress. "What great artist was ever without

Digitized by Google

one?" thought he. Long, long had he sighed for some one whom he might love, some one to whom he might address the poems which he was in the habit of making. Hundreds of such fragments had he composed, addressed to Leila, Ximena, Ada — imaginary beauties, whom he courted in dreamy verse. With what joy would he replace all those by a real charmer of flesh and blood! Away he went, then, on this evening — the tyranny of Mrs. Gann towards poor Caroline having awakened all his sympathies in the gentle girl's favour — determined now and for ever to make her the mistress of his heart. Monna-Lisa, the Fornarina, Lenonardo, Raphael — he thought of all these, and vowed that his Caroline should be made famous and live for ever on his canvas. While Mrs. Gann was preparing for her friends, and entertaining them at tea and whist; while Caroline, all unconscious of the love she inspired, was weeping upstairs in her little garret; while Mr. Brandon was enjoying the refined conversation of Gann and Swigby, over their glass and pipe in the office, Andrea walked abroad by the side of the ocean; and, before he was wet through, walked himself into the most fervid affection for poor persecuted Caroline. The reader might have observed him (had not the night been very dark, and a great deal too wet to allow a sensible reader to go abroad on such an errand) at the seashore standing on a rock, and drawing from his bosom a locket which contained a curl of hair tied up in riband. He looked at it for a moment, and then flung it away from him into the black boiling waters below him.

"No other 'air but thine, Caroline, shall ever rest near this 'art!" he said, and kissed the locket and restored it to its place. Light-minded youth, whose hair was it that he thus flung away? How many times had Andrea shown that very ringlet in strictest confidence to several

Digitized by Google

brethren of the brush, and declared that it was the hair of a dear girl in Spain whom he loved to madness? Alas! 't was but a fiction of his fevered brain; every one of his friends had a locket of hair, and Andrea, who had no love until now, had clipped this precious token from the wig of a lovely lay-figure, with cast-iron joints and a card-board head, that had stood for some time in his atelier. I don't know that he felt any shame about the proceeding, for he was of such a warm imagination that he had grown to believe that the hair did actually come from a girl in Spain, and only parted with it on yielding to a superior attachment.

This attachment being fixed on, the young painter came home wet through; passed the night in reading Byron; making sketches, and burning them; writing poems to Caroline, and expunging them with pitiless india-rubber. A romantic man makes a point of sitting up all night, and pacing his chamber; and you may see many a composition of Andrea's dated "Midnight, 10th of March, A. F.," with his peculiar flourish over the initials. He was not sorry to be told in the morning, by the ladies at breakfast, that he looked dreadfully pale; and answered, laying his hand on his forehead and shaking his head gloomily, that he could get no sleep: and then he would heave a huge sigh; and Miss Bella and Miss Linda would look at each other, and grin according to their wont. He was glad, I say, to have his woe remarked, and continued his sleeplessness for two or three nights; but he was certainly still more glad when he heard Mr. Brandon, on the fourth morning, cry out, in a shrill angry voice, to Becky the maid, to give the gentleman upstairs his compliments — Mr. Brandon's compliments — and tell him that he could not get a wink of sleep for the horrid trampling he kept up. "I am hanged if I stay in the house a night longer," added

Digitized by Google

the first floor sharply, "if that Mr. Fitch kicks up such a confounded noise!" Mr. Fitch's point was gained, and henceforth he was as quiet as a mouse; for his wish was not only to be in love, but to let everybody know that he was in love, or where is the use of a *belle passion?*

So, whenever he saw Caroline, at meals, or in the passage, he used to stare at her with the utmost power of his big eyes, and fall to groaning most pathetically. He used to leave his meals untasted, groan, heave sighs, and stare incessantly. Mrs. Gann and her eldest daughters were astonished at these manœuvres; for they never suspected that any man could possibly be such a fool as to fall in love with Caroline. At length the suspicion came upon them, created immense laughter and delight; and the ladies did not fail to rally Caroline in their usual elegant way. Gann, too, loved a joke (much polite waggery had this worthy man practised in select inn-parlours for twenty years past), and would call poor Caroline "Mrs. F.;" and say that, instead of *Fetch* and Carry, as he used to name her, he should style her *Fitch* and Carry for the future; and laugh at this great pun, and make many others of a similar sort, that set Caroline blushing.

Indeed, the girl suffered a great deal more from this raillery than at first may be imagined; for after the first awe inspired by Fitch's whiskers had passed away, and he had drawn the young ladies' pictures, and made designs in their albums, and in the midst of their jokes and conversation had remained perfectly silent, the Gann family had determined that the man was an idiot: and, indeed, were not very wide of the mark. In everything except his own peculiar art honest Fitch *was* an idiot; and as upon the subject of painting, the Ganns, like most people of their class in England, were profoundly

Digitized by Google

ignorant, it came to pass that he would breakfast and dine for many days in their company, and not utter one single syllable. So they looked upon him with extreme pity and contempt, as a harmless, good-natured, crack-brained creature, quite below them in the scale of intellect, and only to be endured because he paid a certain number of shillings weekly to the Gann exchequer. Mrs. Gann in all companies was accustomed to talk about her idiot. Neighbours and children used to peer at him as he strutted down the street; and though every young lady, including my dear Caroline, is flattered by having a lover, at least they don't like such a lover as this. The Misses Macarty (after having set their caps at him very fiercely, and quarrelled concerning him on his first coming to lodge at their house) vowed and protested now that he was no better than a chimpanzee; and Caroline and Becky agreed that this insult was as great as any that could be paid to the painter. "He 's a good creature, too," said Becky, "crack-brained as he is. Do you know, miss, he gave me half a sovereign to buy a new collar, after that business t' other day?"

"And did — Mr. ——, — did the first floor say anything?" asked Caroline.

"Did n't he! he 's a funny gentleman, that Brandon, sure enough; and when I took him up breakfast next morning, asked about Sims the pilot, and what I gi'ed Sims for the collar and brooch, — he, he!"

And this was indeed a correct report of Mr. Brandon's conversation with Becky; he had been infinitely amused with the whole transaction, and wrote his friend the viscount a capital facetious account of the manners and customs of the native inhabitants of the Isle of Thanet.

And now, when Mr. Fitch's passion was fully developed — as far, that is, as sighs and ogles could give it utterance — a curious instance of that spirit of con-

Digitized by Google

tradiction for which our race is remarkable was seen in the behaviour of Mr. Brandon. Although Caroline, in the depths of her little silly heart, had set him down for her divinity, her wondrous fairy prince, who was to deliver her from her present miserable durance, she had never by word or deed acquainted Brandon with her inclination for him, but had, with instinctive modesty, avoided him more sedulously than before. He, too, had never bestowed a thought upon her. How should such a Jove as Mr. Brandon, from the cloudy summit of his fashionable Olympus, look down and perceive such an humble, retiring being as poor little Caroline Gann? Thinking her at first not disagreeable, he had never, until the day of the dinner, bestowed one single further thought upon her; and only when exasperated by the Miss Macartys' behaviour towards him, did he begin to think how sweet it would be to make them jealous and unhappy.

"The uncouth grinning monsters," said he, "with their horrible court of Bob Smiths and Jack Joneses, daring to look down upon me, a gentleman, — me, the celebrated *mangeur des cœurs* — a man of genius, fashion, and noble family! If I could but revenge myself on them! What injury can I invent to wound them."

It is curious to what points a man in his passion will go. Mr. Brandon had long since, in fact, tried to do the greatest possible injury to the young ladies; for it had been, at the first dawn of his acquaintance, as we are bound with much sorrow to confess, his fixed intention to ruin one or the other of them. And when the young ladies had, by their coldness and indifference to him, frustrated this benevolent intention, he straightway fancied that they had injured him severely, and cast about for means to revenge himself upon them.

This point is, to be sure, a very delicate one to treat,

Digitized by Google

— for in words, at least, the age has grown to be wonderfully moral, and refuses to hear discourses upon such subjects. But human nature, as far as I am able to learn, has not much changed since the time when Richardson wrote and Hogarth painted, a century ago. There are wicked Lovelaces abroad, ladies, now as then, when it was considered no shame to expose the rogues; and pardon us, therefore, for hinting that such there be. Elegant acts of *rouerie*, such as that meditated by Mr. Brandon, are often performed still by dashing young men of the world, who think no sin of an *amourette*, but glory in it, especially if the victim be a person of mean condition. Had Brandon succeeded (such is the high moral state of our British youth), all his friends would have pronounced him, and he would have considered himself, to be a very lucky, captivating dog; nor, as I believe, would he have had a single pang of conscience for the rascally action which he had committed. This supreme act of scoundrelism has man permitted to himself — to deceive women. When we consider how he has availed himself of the privilege so created by him, indeed one may sympathise with the advocates of woman's rights who point out this monstrous wrong. We have read of that wretched woman of old whom the pious Pharisees were for stoning incontinently; but we don't hear that they made any outcry against *the man* who was concerned in the crime. Where was he? Happy, no doubt, and easy in mind, and regaling some choice friends over a bottle with the history of his success.

Being thus injured then, Mr. Brandon longed for revenge. How should he repay these impertinent young women for slighting his addresses? "*Pardi*," said he; "just to punish their pride and insolence, I have a great mind to make love to their sister."

He did not, however, for some time condescend to

Digitized by Google

perform this threat. Eagles such as Brandon do not sail down from the clouds in order to pounce upon small flies, and soar airwards again, contented with such an ignoble booty. In a word, he never gave a minute's thought to Miss Caroline, until further circumstances occurred which caused this great man to consider her as an object somewhat worthy of his remark.

The violent affection suddenly exhibited by Mr. Fitch, the painter, towards poor little Caroline was the point which determined Brandon to begin to act.

"My dear Viscount" (wrote he to the same Lord Cinqbars whom he formerly addressed) — "Give me joy; for in a week's time it is my intention to be violently in love,— and love is no small amusement in a watering-place in winter.

"I told you about the fair Juliana Gann and her family. I forgot whether I mentioned how the Juliana had two fair daughters, the Rosalind and the Isabella; and another, Caroline by name, not so good-looking as her half-sisters, but, nevertheless, a pleasing young person.

"Well, when I came hither, I had nothing to do but to fall in love with the two handsomest; and did so, taking many walks with them, talking much nonsense; passing long dismal evenings over horrid tea with them and their mamma: laying regular siege, in fact, to these Margate beauties, who, according to the common rule in such cases, could not, I thought, last long.

"Miserable deception! disgusting aristocratic blindness!" (Mr. Brandon always assumed that his own high birth and eminent position were granted.) "Would you believe it, that I, who have seen, fought, and conquered in so many places, should have been ignominiously defeated here? Just as American Jackson defeated our Peninsular veterans, I, an old Continental conqueror too, have been overcome by this ignoble enemy. These women have entrenched themselves so firmly in their vulgarity, that I have been beaten back several times

Digitized by Google

with disgrace, being quite unable to make an impression. The monsters, too, keep up a dreadful fire from behind their entrenchments; and besides have raised the whole country against me: in a word, all the snobs of their acquaintance are in arms. There is Bob Smith, the linendraper; Harry Jones, who keeps the fancy tea-shop; young Glauber, the apothecary; and sundry other persons, who are ready to eat me when they see me in the streets; and are all at the beck of the victorious Amazons.

"How is a gentleman to make head against such a *canaille* as this? — a regular *jacquerie*. Once or twice I have thought of retreating; but a retreat, for sundry reasons I have, is inconvenient. I can't go to London; I am known at Dover; I believe there is a bill against me at Canterbury; at Chatham there are sundry quartered regiments whose recognition I should be unwilling to risk. I must stay here — and be hanged to the place — until my better star shall rise.

"But I am determined that my stay shall be to some purpose; and so to show how persevering I am, I shall make one more trial upon the third daughter, — yes, upon the third daughter, a family Cinderella, who shall, I am determined, make her sisters *crever* with envy. I merely mean fun, you know — not mischief, — for Cinderella is but a little child: and, besides, I am the most harmless fellow breathing, but must have my joke. Now, Cinderella has a lover, the bearded painter of whom I spoke to you in a former letter. He has lately plunged into the most extraordinary fits of passion for her, and is more mad than even he was before. Woe betide you, O painter! I have nothing to do: a month to do that nothing in; in that time, mark my words, I will laugh at that painter's beard. Should you like a lock of it, or a sofa stuffed with it? there is beard enough: or should you like to see a specimen of poor little Cinderella's golden ringlets? Command your slave. I wish I had paper enough to write you an account of a grand Gann dinner at which I assisted, and of a scene which there took place; and how Cinderella was dressed

Digitized by Google

out, not by a fairy, but by a charitable kitchen-maid, and was turned out of the room by her indignant mamma, for appearing in the scullion's finery. But my *forte* does not lie in such descriptions of polite life. We drank port, and toasts after dinner: here is the *menu*, and the names and order of the eaters."

. . . . . .

The bill of fare has been given already, and need not, therefore, be again laid before the public.

"What a fellow that is!" said young Lord Cinqbars, reading the letter to his friends, and in a profound admiration of his tutor's genius.

"And to think that he was a reading man too, and took a double first," cried another; "why, the man's an Admirable Crichton."

"Upon my life, though, he's a little too bad," said a third, who was a moralist. And with this a fresh bowl of milk-punch came reeking from the college butteries, and the jovial party discussed that.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER V

CONTAINS A GREAT DEAL OF COMPLICATED LOVE-MAKING

THE Misses Macarty were excessively indignant that Mr. Fitch should have had the audacity to fall in love with their sister; and poor Caroline's life was not, as may be imagined, made much the happier by the envy and passion thus excited. Mr. Fitch's amour was the source of a great deal of pain to her. Her mother would tauntingly say, that as both were beggars, they could not do better than marry; and declared, in the same satirical way, that she should like nothing better than to see a large family of grandchildren about her, to be plagues and burdens upon her, as her daughter was. The short way would have been, when the young painter's intentions were manifest, which they pretty speedily were, to have requested him immediately to quit the house; or, as Mr. Gann said, "to give him the sack at once;" to which measure the worthy man indignantly avowed that he would have resort. But his lady would not allow of any such rudeness; although, for her part, she professed the strongest scorn and contempt for the painter. For the painful fact must be stated: Fitch had a short time previously paid no less a sum than a whole quarter's board and lodging in advance, at Mrs. Gann's humble request, and he possessed his landlady's receipt for that sum; the mention of which circumstance silenced Gann's objections at once. And indeed, it is pretty certain that, with all

Digitized by Google

her taunts to her daughter and just abuse of Fitch's poverty, Mrs. Gann in her heart was not altogether averse to the match. In the first place, she loved match-making; next, she would be glad to be rid of her daughter at any rate; and, besides, Fitch's aunt, the auctioneer's wife, was rich, and had no children; painters, as she had heard, make often a great deal of money, and Fitch might be a clever one, for aught she knew. So he was allowed to remain in the house, an undeclared but very assiduous lover; and to sigh, and to moan, and make verses and portraits of his beloved, and build castles in the air as best he might. Indeed our humble Cinderella was in a very curious position. She felt a tender passion for the first floor, and was adored by the second floor, and had to wait upon both at the summons of the bell of either; and as the poor little thing was compelled not to notice any of the sighs and glances which the painter bestowed upon her, she also had schooled herself to maintain a quiet demeanour towards Mr. Brandon, and not allow him to discover the secret which was labouring in her little breast.

I think it may be laid down as a pretty general rule, that most romantic little girls of Caroline's age have such a budding sentiment as this young person entertained; quite innocent of course; nourished and talked of in delicious secrecy to the *confidante* of the hour. Or else what are novels made for? Had Caroline read of Valancourt and Emily for nothing, or gathered no good example from those five tear-fraught volumes which describe the loves of Miss Helen Mar and Sir William Wallace? Many a time had she depicted Brandon in a fancy costume, such as the fascinating Valancourt wore; or painted herself as Helen, trying a sash round her knight's cuirass, and watching him forth to battle. Silly fancies, no doubt; but consider, madam,

Digitized by Google

the poor girl's age and education; the only instruction she had ever received was from these tender, kind-hearted, silly books: the only happiness which Fate had allowed her was in this little silent world of fancy. It would be hard to grudge the poor thing her dreams; and many such did she have, and impart blushingly to honest Becky, as they sate by the humble kitchen-fire.

Although it cost her heart a great pang, she had once ventured to implore her mother not to send her upstairs to the lodgers' rooms, for she shrunk at the notion of the occurrence that Brandon should discover her regard for him; but this point had never entered Mrs. Gann's sagacious head. She thought her daughter wished to avoid Fitch, and sternly bade her do her duty, and not give herself such impertinent airs; and, indeed, it can't be said that poor Caroline was very sorry at being compelled to continue to see Brandon. To do both gentlemen justice, neither ever said a word unfit for Caroline to hear. Fitch would have been torn to pieces by a thousand wild horses rather than have breathed a single syllable to hurt her feelings; and Brandon, though by no means so squeamish on ordinary occasions, was innately a gentleman, and from taste rather than from virtue, was carefully respectful in his behaviour to her.

As for the Misses Macarty themselves, it has been stated that they had already given away their hearts several times; Miss Isabella being at this moment attached to a certain young wine-merchant, and to Lieutenant or Colonel Swabber of the Spanish service; and Miss Rosalind having a decided fondness for a foreign nobleman, with black mustachios, who had paid a visit to Margate. Of Miss Bella's lovers, Swabber had disappeared; but she still met the wine-merchant pretty often, and it is believed had gone very nigh to accept him. As for Miss Rosalind, I am sorry to say that the

Digitized by Google

course of her true love ran by no means smoothly: the Frenchman had turned out to be not a marquess, but a billiard-marker; and a sad, sore subject the disappointment was with the neglected lady.

We should have spoken of it long since, had the subject been one that was much canvassed in the Gann family; but once when Gann had endeavoured to rally his stepdaughter on this unfortunate attachment (using for the purpose those delicate terms of wit for which the honest gentleman was always famous), Miss Linda had flown into such a violent fury, and comported herself in a way so dreadful, that James Gann, Esquire, was fairly frightened out of his wits by the threats, screams, and imprecations which she uttered. Miss Bella, who was disposed to be jocose likewise, was likewise awed into silence; for her dear sister talked of tearing her eyes out that minute, and uttered some hints, too, regarding love-matters personally affecting Miss Bella herself, which caused that young lady to turn pale-red, to mutter something about "wicked lies," and to leave the room immediately. Nor was the subject ever again broached by the Ganns. Even when Mrs. Gann once talked about that odious French impostor, she was stopped immediately, not by the lady concerned, but by Miss Bella, who cried, sharply, "Mamma, hold your tongue, and don't vex our dear Linda by alluding to any such stuff." It is most probable that the young ladies had had a private conference, which, beginning a little fiercely at first, had ended amicably: and so the marquess was mentioned no more.

Miss Linda, then, was comparatively free (for Bob Smith, the linendraper, and young Glauber, the apothecary, went for nothing); and, very luckily for her, a successor was found for the faithless Frenchman, almost immediately.

Digitized by Google

This gentleman was a commoner, to be sure; but had a good estate of five hundred a year, kept his horse and gig, and was, as Mr. Gann remarked, as good a fellow as ever lived. Let us say at once that the new lover was no other than Mr. Swigby. From the day when he had been introduced to the family he appeared to be very much attracted by the two sisters; sent a turkey off his own farm, and six bottles of prime Hollands, to Mr. and Mrs. Gann, in presents; and, in ten short days after his first visit, had informed his friend Gann that he was violently in love with two women whose names he would never — never breathe. The worthy Gann knew right well how the matter was; for he had not failed to remark Swigby's melancholy, and to attribute it to its right cause.

Swigby was forty-eight years of age, stout, hearty, gay, much given to drink, and had never been a lady's man, or, indeed, passed half-a-dozen evenings in ladies' society. He thought Gann the noblest and finest fellow in the world. He never heard any singing like James's, nor any jokes like his; nor had met with such an accomplished gentleman or man of the world. "Gann has his faults," Swigby would say at the "Bag of Nails;" "which of us has not? — but I tell you what, he's the greatest trump I ever see." Many scores of scores had he paid for Gann, many guineas and crown-pieces had he lent him, since he came into his property some three years before. What were Swigby's former pursuits I can't tell. What need we care? Had n't he five hundred a year now, and a horse and gig? Ay, that he had.

Since his accession to fortune, this gay young bachelor had taken his share (what he called "his whack") of pleasure; had been at one — nay, perhaps, at two — public-houses every night; and had been tipsy, I

Digitized by Google

make no doubt, nearly a thousand times in the course of the three years. Many people had tried to cheat him; but, no, no! he knew what was what, and in all matters of money was simple and shrewd. Gann's gentility won him; his bragging, his *ton*, and the stylish tuft on his chin. To be invited to his house was a proud moment; and when he went away, after the banquet described in the last chapter, he was in a perfect ferment of love and liquor.

"What a stylish woman is that Mrs. Gann!" thought he, as he tumbled into bed at his inn; "fine she must have been as a gal! fourteen stone now, without saddle or bridle, and no mistake. And them Miss Macartys. Jupiter! what spanking, handsome, elegant creatures! — real elegance in both on 'em! Such hair! — black 's the word — as black as my mare; such cheeks, such necks, and shoulders!" At noon he repeated these observations to Gann himself, as he walked up and down the pier with that gentleman, smoking Manilla cheroots. He was in raptures with his evening. Gann received his praises with much majestic good-humour.

"Blood, sir!" said he, "blood 's everything! Them gals have been brought up as few ever have. I don't speak of myself; but their mother — their mother 's a lady, sir. Show me a woman in England as is better bred or knows the world more than my Juliana!"

"It 's impawssible," said Swigby.

"Think of the company we 've kep', sir, before our misfortunes — the fust in the land. Brandenburg House, sir, — England's injured queen. Law bless you! Juliana was always there."

"I make no doubt, sir; you can see it in her," said Swigby, solemnly.

"And as for those gals, why, ain't they related to the fust families in Ireland, sir? — In course they are.

Digitized by Google

As I said before, blood's everything; and those young women have the best of it: they are connected with the reg'lar old noblesse."

"They have the best of everythink, I'm sure," said Swigby, "and deserve it, too," and relapsed into his morning remarks. "What creatures! what elegance! what hair and eyes, sir! — black, and all's black, as I say. What complexion, sir! — ay, and what *makes*, too! Such a neck and shoulders I never see!"

Gann, who had his hands in his pockets (his friend's arm being hooked into one of his), here suddenly withdrew his hand from its hiding-place, clenched his fist, assumed a horrible knowing grin, and gave Mr. Swigby such a blow in the ribs as well nigh sent him into the water. "You sly dog!" said Mr. Gann, with inexpressible emphasis; "you've found *that* out, too, have you? Have a care, Joe my boy, — have a care."

And herewith Gann and Joe burst into tremendous roars of laughter, fresh explosions taking place at intervals of five minutes during the rest of the walk. The two friends parted exceedingly happy; and when they met that evening at "The Nails" Gann drew Swigby mysteriously into the bar, and thrust into his hand a triangular piece of pink paper, which the latter read: —

"Mrs. Gann and the Misses Macarty request the honour and pleasure of Mr. Swigby's company (if you have no better engagement) to tea to-morrow evening, at half-past five.

"MARGARETTA COTTAGE, SALAMANCA ROAD NORTH,
Thursday evening."

The faces of the two gentlemen were wonderfully expressive of satisfaction as this communication passed between them. And I am led to believe that Mrs. Gann had been unusually pleased with her husband's conduct

Digitized by Google

on that day, for honest James had no less than thirteen and sixpence in his pocket, and insisted, as usual, upon standing glasses all round. Joe Swigby, left alone in the little parlour behind the bar, called for a sheet of paper, a new pen and a wafer, and in the space of half-an-hour concocted a very spirited and satisfactory answer to this note; which was carried off by Gann, and duly delivered. Punctually at half-past five Mr. Joseph Swigby knocked at Margaretta Cottage door, in his new coat with glistering brass-buttons, his face clean-shaved, and his great ears shining over his great shirt-collar delightfully bright and red.

What happened at this tea-party it is needless here to say; but Swigby came away from it quite as much enchanted as before, and declared that the duets sung by the ladies in hideous discord, were the sweetest music he had ever heard. He sent the gin and the turkey the next day; and, of course, was invited to dine.

The dinner was followed up on his part by an offer to drive all the young ladies and their mamma into the country; and he hired a very smart barouche to conduct them. The invitation was not declined; and Fitch, too, was asked by Mr. Swigby, in the height of his good-humour, and accepted with the utmost delight. "Me and Joe will go on the box," said Gann. "You four ladies and Mr. Fitch shall go inside. Carry must go bodkin; but she ain't very big."

"Carry, indeed, will stop at home," said her mamma; "she 's not fit to go out."

At which poor Fitch's jaw fell; it was in order to ride with her that he had agreed to accompany the party; nor could he escape now, having just promised so eagerly.

"Oh, don't let 's have that proud Brandon," said the young ladies, when the good-natured Mr. Swigby pro-

Digitized by Google

posed to ask that gentleman; and therefore he was not invited to join them in their excursion: but he stayed at home very unconcernedly, and saw the barouche and its load drive off. Somebody else looked at it from the parlour-window with rather a heavy heart, and that some one was poor Caroline. The day was bright and sunshiny; the spring was beginning early; it would have been pleasant to have been a lady for once, and to have driven along in a carriage with prancing horses. Mr. Fitch looked after her in a very sheepish, melancholy way; and was so dismal and silly during the first part of the journey, that Miss Linda, who was next to him, said to her papa that she would change places with him; and actually mounted the box by the side of the happy, trembling Mr. Swigby. How proud he was, to be sure! How knowingly did he spank the horses along, and fling out the shillings at the turnpikes!

"Bless you, *he* don't care for change!" said Gann, as one of the toll-takers offered to render some coppers; and Joe felt infinitely obliged to his friend for setting off his amiable qualities in such a way.

O mighty Fate, that over us miserable mortals rulest supreme, with what small means are thy ends effected! — with what scornful ease and mean instruments does it please thee to govern mankind! Let each man think of the circumstances of his life, and how its lot has been determined. The getting up a little earlier or later, the turning down this street or that, the eating of this dish or the other, may influence all the years and actions of a future life. Mankind walks down the left-hand side of Regent Street instead of the right, and meets a friend who asks him to dinner, and goes, and finds the turtle remarkably good, and the iced punch very cool and pleasant; and, being in a merry, jovial, idle mood, has no objection to a social rubber of whist

Digitized by Google

—nay, to a few more glasses of that cool punch. In the most careless, good-humoured way, he loses a few points; and still feels thirsty, and loses a few more points; and, like a man of spirit, increases his stakes, to be sure, and just by that walk down Regent Street is ruined for life. Or he walks down the right-hand side of Regent Street instead of the left, and, good heavens! who is that charming young creature who has just stepped into her carriage from Mr. Fraser's shop, and to whom and her mamma Mr. Fraser has made the most elegant bow in the world? It is the lovely Miss Moidore, with a hundred thousand pounds, who has remarked your elegant figure, and regularly drives to town on the first of the month, to purchase her darling Magazine. You drive after her as fast as the hack-cab will carry you. She reads the Magazine the whole way. She stops at her papa's elegant villa at Hampstead, with a conservatory, a double coach-house, and a park-like paddock. As the lodge-gate separates you from that dear girl, she looks back just once, and blushes. *Erubuit, salva est res.* She has blushed, and you are all right. In a week you are introduced to the family, and pronounced a charming young fellow of high principles. In three weeks you have danced twenty-nine quadrilles with her, and whisked her through several miles of waltzes. In a month Mrs. O'Flaherty has flung herself into the arms of her mother, just having come from a visit to the village of Gretna, near Carlisle; and you have an account at your banker's ever after. What is the cause of all this good fortune? —a walk on a particular side of Regent Street. And so true and indisputable is this fact, that there 's a young north-country gentleman with whom I am acquainted, that daily paces up and down the above-named street for many hours, fully expecting that such an adventure will happen to

Digitized by Google

him; for which end he keeps a cab in readiness at the corner of Vigo Lane.

Now, after a dissertation in this history, the reader is pretty sure to know that a moral is coming; and the facts connected with our tale, which are to be drawn from the above little essay on fate, are simply these: — 1. If Mr. Fitch had not heard Mr. Swigby invite *all* the ladies, he would have refused Swigby's invitation, and stayed at home. 2. If he had not been in the carriage, it is quite certain that Miss Rosalind Macarty would not have been seated by him on the back seat. 3. If he had not been sulky, she never would have asked her papa to let her take his place on the box. 4. If she had not taken her papa's place on the box, not one of the circumstances would have happened which did happen; and which were as follows: —

1. Miss Bella remained inside.

2. Mr. Swigby, who was wavering between the two, like a certain animal between two bundles of hay, was determined by this circumstance, and made proposals to Miss Linda, whispering to Miss Linda: "Miss, I ain't equal to the like of you; but I'm hearty, healthy, and have five hundred a year. Will you marry me?" In fact, this very speech had been taught him by cunning Gann, who saw well enough that Swigby would speak to one or other of his daughters. And to it the young lady replied, also in a whispering, agitated tone, "Law, Mr. S.! What an odd man! How can you?" And, after a little pause, added, "*Speak to mamma.*"

3. (And this is the main point of my story.) If little Caroline had been allowed to go out, she never would have been left alone with Brandon at Margate. When Fate wills that something should come to pass, she sends forth a million of little circumstances to clear and prepare the way.

Digitized by Google

In the month of April (as indeed in half-a-score of other months of the year) the reader may have remarked that the cold north-east wind is prevalent; and that when, tempted by a glimpse of sunshine, he issues forth to take the air, he receives not only it, but such a quantity of it as is enough to keep him shivering through the rest of the miserable month. On one of these happy days of English weather (it was the very day before the pleasure-party described in the last chapter) Mr. Brandon cursing heartily his country, and thinking how infinitely more congenial to him were the winds and habits prevalent in other nations, was marching over the cliffs near Margate, in the midst of a storm of shrill east wind which no ordinary mortal could bear, when he found perched on the cliff, his fingers blue with cold, the celebrated Andrea Fitch, employed in sketching a land or a sea scape on a sheet of grey paper.

"You have chosen a fine day for sketching," said Mr. Brandon, bitterly, his thin aquiline nose peering out livid from the fur collar of his coat.

Mr. Fitch smiled, understanding the allusion.

"An hartist, sir," said he, "does n't mind the coldness of the weather. There was a chap in the Academy who took sketches twenty degrees below zero in Hiceland — Mount 'Ecla, sir! *E* was the man that gave the first hidea of Mount 'Ecla for the Surrey Zoological Gardens."

"He must have been a wonderful enthusiast!" said Mr. Brandon; "I fancy that most would prefer to sit at home, and not numb their fingers in such a freezing storm as this!"

"Storm, sir!" replied Fitch, majestically; "I live in a storm, sir! A true hartist is never so 'appy as when he can have the advantage to gaze upon yonder tempestuous hocean in one of its hangry moods."

Digitized by Google

"Ay, there comes the steamer," answered Mr. Brandon; "I can fancy that there are a score of unhappy people on board who are not artists, and would wish to behold your ocean quiet."

"They are not poets, sir: the glorious hever-changing expression of the great countenance of Nature is not seen by them. I should consider myself unworthy of my hart, if I could not bear a little privation of cold or 'eat for its sake. And besides, sir, whatever their hardships may be, such a sight hamply repays me; for, although my private sorrows may be (has they are) tremendous, I never can look abroad upon the green hearth and hawful sea, without in a measure forgetting my personal woes and wrongs; for what right has a poor creature like me to think of his affairs in the presence of such a spectacle as this? I can't, sir; I feel ashamed of myself; I bow my 'ead and am quiet. When I set myself to examining hart, sir (by which I mean nature), I don't dare to think of anything else."

"You worship a very charming and consoling mistress," answered Mr. Brandon, with a supercilious air, lighting and beginning to smoke a cigar; "your enthusiasm does you credit."

"If you have another," said Andrea Fitch, "I should like to smoke one, for you seem to have a real feeling about hart, and I was a-getting so deucedly cold here, that really there was scarcely any bearing of it."

"The cold is very severe," replied Mr. Brandon.

"No, no, it's not the weather, sir!" said Mr. Fitch; "it's here, sir, here" (pointing to the left side of his waistcoat).

"What! you, too, have had sorrows?"

"Sorrows, sir! hagonies — hagonies, which I have never unfolded to any mortal! I have hendured halmost hevery thing. Poverty, sir, 'unger, hobloquy,

Digitized by Google

'opeless love! but for my hart, sir, I should be the most miserable wretch in the world!"

And herewith Mr. Fitch began to pour forth into Mr. Brandon's ears the history of some of those sorrows under which he laboured, and which he communicated to every single person who would listen to him.

Mr. Brandon was greatly amused by Fitch's prattle, and the latter told him under what privations he had studied his art: how he had starved for three years in Paris and Rome, while labouring at his profession; how meanly jealous the Royal Academy was which would never exhibit a single one of his pictures; how he had been driven from the Heternal City by the attentions of an immense fat Mrs. Carrickfergus, who absolutely proposed marriage to him; and how he was at this moment (a fact of which Mr. Brandon was already quite aware) madly and desperately in love with one of the most beautiful maidens in this world. For Fitch, having a mistress to his heart's desire, was boiling with impatience to have a confidant; what, indeed, would be the joy of love, if one were not allowed to speak of one's feelings to a friend who could know how to sympathise with them? Fitch was sure Brandon did, because Brandon was the very first person with whom the painter had talked since he had come to the resolution recorded in the last chapter.

"I hope she is as rich as that unlucky Mrs. Carrickfergus, whom you treated so cruelly?" said the confidant, affecting entire ignorance.

"Rich, sir? no, I thank heaven, she has not a penny!" said Fitch.

"I presume, then, you are yourself independent," said Brandon, smiling; "for in the marriage state, one or the other of the parties concerned should bring a portion of the filthy lucre."

Digitized by Google

"Have n't I my profession, sir?" said Fitch, majestically, having declared five minutes before that he starved in his profession. "Do you suppose a painter gets nothing? Have n't I horders from the first people in Europe? — commissions, sir, to hexecute 'istory-pieces, battle-pieces, haltar-pieces?"

"Master-pieces, I am sure," said Brandon, bowing politely; "for a gentleman of your astonishing genius can do no other."

The delighted artist received this compliment with many blushes, and vowed and protested that his performances were not really worthy of such high praise; but he fancied Mr. Brandon a great connoisseur, nevertheless, and unburdened his mind to him in a manner still more open. Fitch's sketch was by this time finished; and, putting his drawing implements together, he rose, and the gentlemen walked away. The sketch was hugely admired by Mr. Brandon, and when they came home, Fitch, culling it dexterously out of his book, presented it in a neat speech to his friend, "the gifted hamateur."

"The gifted hamateur" received the drawing with a profusion of thanks, and so much did he value it, that he had actually torn off a piece to light a cigar with, when he saw that words were written on the other side of the paper, and deciphered the following: —

"SONG OF THE VIOLET

"A humble flower long time I pined,
Upon the solitary plain.
And trembled at the angry wind,
And shrunk before the bitter rain.
And, oh! 't was in a blessed hour,
A passing wanderer chanced to see
And, pitying the lonely flower,
To stoop and gather me.

Digitized by Google

"I fear no more the tempest rude,
On dreary heath no more I pine,
But left my cheerless solitude,
To deck the breast of Caroline.
Alas! our days are brief at best,
Nor long I fear will mine endure,
Though shelter'd here upon a breast
So gentle and so pure.

"It draws the fragrance from my leaves,
It robs me of my sweetest breath;
And every time it falls and heaves,
It warns me of my coming death.
But one I know would glad forego
All joys of life to be as I;
An hour to rest on that sweet breast,
And then, contented, die.

"ANDREA."

When Mr. Brandon had finished the perusal of these verses, he laid them down with an air of considerable vexation. "Egad!" said he, "this fellow, fool as he is, is not so great a fool as he seems; and if he goes on this way, may finish by turning the girl's head. They can't resist a man if he but presses hard enough —I know they can't!" And here Mr. Brandon mused over his various experience, which confirmed his observation, that be a man ever so silly, a gentlewoman will yield to him out of sheer weariness. And he thought of several cases in which, by the persevering application of copies of verses, young ladies had been brought from dislike to sufferance of a man, from sufferance to partiality, and from partiality to St. George's, Hanover Square. "A ruffian who murders his *h*'s to carry off such a delicate little creature as that!" cried he in a transport: "it shall never be if I can prevent it!" He thought Caroline more and more beautiful every instant, and was himself by this time almost as much in love with her as Fitch himself.

Digitized by Google

Mr. Brandon, then, saw Fitch depart in Swigby's carriage with no ordinary feelings of pleasure. Miss Caroline was not with them. "Now is my time!" thought Brandon; and, ringing the bell, he inquired with some anxiety, from Becky, where Miss Caroline was? It must be confessed that mistress and maid were at their usual occupation, working and reading novels in the back-parlour. Poor Carry! what other pleasure had she?

She had not gone through many pages, or Becky advanced many stitches in the darning of that tablecloth which the good housewife, Mrs. Gann, had confided to her charge, when an humble knock was heard at the door of the sitting-room, that caused the blushing Caroline to tremble and drop her book, as Miss Lydia Languish does in the play.

Mr. George Brandon entered with a very demure air. He held in his hand a black satin neck-scarf, of which a part had come to be broken. He could not wear it in its present condition, that was evident; but Miss Caroline was blushing and trembling a great deal too much to suspect that this wicked Brandon had himself torn his own scarf with his own hands one moment before he entered the room. I don't know whether Becky had any suspicions of this fact, or whether it was only the ordinary roguish look which she had when anything pleased her, that now lighted up her eyes and caused her mouth to expand smilingly, and her fat red cheeks to gather up into wrinkles.

"I have had a sad misfortune," said he, "and should be very much obliged indeed to Miss Caroline to repair it." (Caroline was said with a kind of tender hesitation that caused the young woman, so named, to blush more than ever.) "It is the only stock I have in the world, and I can't go barenecked into the streets; can I, Mrs. Becky?"

Digitized by Google

"No, sure," said Becky.

"Not unless I was a celebrated painter, like Mr. Fitch," added Mr. Brandon, with a smile, which was reflected speedily upon the face of the lady whom he wished to interest. "Those great geniuses," he added, "may do anything."

"For," says Becky, "hee's got enough beard on hees faze to keep hees neck warm!" At which remark, though Miss Caroline very properly said, "For shame, Becky!" Mr. Brandon was so convulsed with laughter, that he fairly fell down upon the sofa on which Miss Caroline was seated. How she startled and trembled, as he flung his arm upon the back of the couch! Mr. Brandon did not attempt to apologise for what was an act of considerable impertinence, but continued mercilessly to make many more jokes concerning poor Fitch, which were so cleverly suited to the comprehension of the maid and the young mistress, as to elicit a great number of roars of laughter from the one, and to cause the other to smile in spite of herself. Indeed, Brandon had gained a vast reputation with Becky in his morning colloquies with her, and she was ready to laugh at any single word which it pleased him to utter. How many of his good things had this honest scullion carried downstairs to Caroline? and how pitilessly had she contrived to *estropier* them in their passage from the drawing-room to the kitchen?

Well, then, while Mr. Brandon "was a-going on," as Becky said, Caroline had taken his stock, and her little fingers were occupied in repairing the damage he had done to it. Was it clumsiness on her part? Certain it is that the rent took several minutes to repair: of them the *mangeur de cœurs* did not fail to profit, conversing in an easy, kindly, confidential way, which set our fluttering heroine speedily at rest, and enabled her to reply

Digitized by Google

to his continual queries, addressed with much adroitness and an air of fraternal interest, by a number of those pretty little timid whispering yeses and noes, and those gentle, quick looks of the eyes, wherewith young and modest maidens are wont to reply to the questions of seducing young bachelors. Dear yeses and noes, how beautiful you are when gently whispered by pretty lips! —glances of quick innocent eyes, how charming are you! — and how charming the soft blush that steals over the cheek, towards which the dark lashes are drawing the blue-veined eyelids down. And here let the writer of this solemnly declare, upon his veracity, that he means nothing but what is right and moral. But look, I pray you, at an innocent, bashful girl of sixteen: if she be but good, she must be pretty. She is a woman now, but a girl still. How delightful all her ways are! How exquisite her instinctive grace! All the arts of all the Cleopatras are not so captivating as her nature. Who can resist her confiding simplicity, or fail to be touched and conquered by her gentle appeal to protection?

All this Mr. Brandon saw and felt, as many a gentleman educated in this school will. It is not because a man is a rascal himself, that he cannot appreciate virtue and purity very keenly; and our hero did feel for this simple, gentle, tender, artless creature, a real respect and sympathy — a sympathy so fresh and delicious, that he was but too glad to yield to it and indulge in it, and which he mistook, probably, for a real love of virtue, and a return to the days of his innocence.

Indeed, Mr. Brandon, it was no such thing. It was only because vice and debauch were stale for the moment, and this pretty virtue new. It was only because your cloyed appetite was long unused to this simple meat that you felt so keen a relish for it; and I thought

Digitized by Google

of you only the last blessed Saturday, at Mr. Lovegrove's, "West India Tavern," Blackwall, where a company of fifteen epicures, who had scorned the turtle, pooh-poohed the punch, and sent away the whitebait, did suddenly and simultaneously make a rush upon — a dish of *beans and bacon*. And if the assiduous reader of novels will think upon some of the most celebrated works of that species, which have lately appeared in this and other countries, he will find, amidst much debauch of sentiment and enervating dissipation of intellect, that the writers have from time to time a returning appetite for innocence and freshness, and indulge us with occasional repasts of beans and bacon. How long Mr. Brandon remained by Miss Caroline's side I have no means of judging; it is probable, however, that he stayed a much longer time than was necessary for the mending of his black-satin stock. I believe, indeed, that he read to the ladies a great part of the "Mysteries of Udolpho," over which they were engaged; and interspersed his reading with many remarks of his own, both tender and satirical. Whether he was in her company half-an-hour or four hours, this is certain, that the time slipped away very swiftly with poor Caroline; and when a carriage drove up to the door, and shrill voices were heard crying, "Becky!" "Carry!" and Rebecca the maid starting up, cried, "Lor', here's missus!" and Brandon jumped rather suddenly off the sofa, and fled up the stairs — when all these events took place, I know Caroline felt very sad indeed, and opened the door for her parents with a very heavy heart.

Swigby helped Miss Linda off the box with excessive tenderness. Papa was bustling and roaring in high good-humour, and called for "hot water and tumblers immediately." Mrs. Gann was gracious; and Miss Bell sulky, as she had good reason to be, for she insisted

Digitized by Google

upon taking the front seat in the carriage before her sister, and had lost a husband by that very piece of obstinacy.

Mr. Fitch, as he entered, bestowed upon Caroline a heavy sigh and a deep stare, and silently ascended to his own apartment. He was lost in thought. The fact is, he was trying to remember some verses regarding a violet, which he had made five years before, and which he had somehow lost from among his papers. So he went upstairs, muttering,

"A humble flower long since I pined
Upon a solitary plain ——"

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER VI

DESCRIBES A SHABBY GENTEEL MARRIAGE, AND MORE LOVE-MAKING

IT will not be necessary to describe the particulars of the festivities which took place on the occasion of Mr. Swigby's marriage to Miss Macarty. The happy pair went off in a postchaise and four to the bridegroom's country-seat, accompanied by the bride's blushing sister; and when the first week of their matrimonial bliss was ended, that worthy woman, Mrs. Gann, with her excellent husband, went to visit the young couple. Miss Caroline was left, therefore, sole mistress of the house, and received especial cautions from her mamma as to prudence, economy, the proper management of the lodgers' bills, and the necessity of staying at home.

Considering that one of the gentlemen remaining in the house was a declared lover of Miss Caroline, I think it is a little surprising that her mother should leave her unprotected; but in this matter the poor are not so particular as the rich; and so this young lady was consigned to the guardianship of her own innocence, and the lodgers' loyalty: nor was there any reason why Mrs. Gann should doubt the latter. As for Mr. Fitch, he would have far preferred to be torn to pieces by ten thousand wild horses, rather than to offer to the young woman any unkindness or insult; and how was Mrs. Gann to suppose that her other lodger was a whit less loyal? that he had any partiality for a person of whom

Digitized by Google

he always spoke as a mean, insignificant little baby? So, without any misgivings, and in a one-horse fly with Mr. Gann by her side, with a bran new green coat and gilt buttons, Juliana Gann went forth to visit her beloved child, and console her in her married state.

And here, were I allowed to occupy the reader with extraneous matters, I could give a very curious and touching picture of the Swigby *ménage*. Mrs. S., I am very sorry to say, quarrelled with her husband on the third day after their marriage, — and for what, pr'thee? Why, because he would smoke, and no gentleman ought to smoke. Swigby, therefore, patiently resigned his pipe, and with it one of the quietest, happiest, kindest companions of his solitude. He was a different man after this; his pipe was as a limb of his body. Having on Tuesday conquered the pipe, Mrs. Swigby on Thursday did battle with her husband's rum-and-water, a drink of an odious smell, as she very properly observed; and the smell was doubly odious, now that the tobacco-smoke no longer perfumed the parlour-breeze, and counteracted the odours of the juice of West India sugar-canes. On Thursday, then, Mr. Swigby and rum held out pretty bravely. Mrs. S. attacked the punch with some sharp-shooting, and fierce charges of vulgarity; to which S. replied, by opening the battery of oaths (chiefly directed to his own eyes, however), and loud protestations that he would never surrender. In three days more, however, the rum-and-water was gone. Mr. Swigby, defeated and prostrate, had given up that stronghold; his young wife and sister were triumphant; and his poor mother, who occupied her son's house, and had till now taken her place at the head of his table, saw that her empire was for ever lost, and was preparing suddenly to succumb to the imperious claims of the mistress of the mansion.

Digitized by Google

All this, I say, I wish I had the liberty to describe at large, as also to narrate the arrival of majestic Mrs. Gann; and a battle-royal which speedily took place between the two worthy mothers-in-law. Noble is the hatred of ladies who stand in this relation to each other; each sees what injury the other is inflicting upon her darling child; each mistrusts, detests, and to her offspring privily abuses the arts and crimes of the other. A house with a wife is often warm enough; a house with a wife and her mother is rather warmer than any spot on the known globe; a house with two mothers-in-law is so excessively hot, that it can be likened to no place on earth at all, but one must go lower for a simile. Think of a wife who despises her husband, and teaches him manners; of an elegant sister, who joins in rallying him (this was almost the only point of union between Bella and Linda now, — for since the marriage, Linda hated her sister consumedly). Think, I say, of two mothers-in-law, — one, large, pompous, and atrociously genteel, — another coarse and shrill, determined not to have her son put upon, — and you may see what a happy fellow Joe Swigby was, and into what a piece of good luck he had fallen.

What would have become of him without his father-in-law? Indeed one shudders to think; but the consequence of that gentleman's arrival and intervention was speedily this: — About four o'clock, when the dinner was removed, and the quarrelling used commonly to set in, the two gents took their hats, and sallied out; and as one has found when the body is inflamed that the application of a stringent medicine may cause the ill to disappear for a while, only to return elsewhere with greater force; in like manner, Mrs. Swigby's sudden victory over the pipe and rum-and-water, although it had caused a temporary cessation of the evil of which

Digitized by Google

she complained, was quite unable to stop it altogether; it disappeared from one spot only to rage with more violence elsewhere. In Swigby's parlour, rum and tobacco odours rose no more (except, indeed, when Mrs. Gann would partake of the former as a restorative); but if you could have seen the "Half-Moon and Snuffers" down the village; if you could have seen the good dry skittle-ground which stretched at the back of that inn, and the window of the back-parlour which superintended that skittle-ground; if the hour at which you beheld these objects was evening, what time the rustics from their toils released, trolled the stout ball amidst the rattling pins (the oaken pins that standing in the sun did cast long shadows on the golden sward); if you had remarked all this, I say, you would have also seen in the back-parlour a tallow candle twinkling in the shade, and standing on a little greasy table. Upon the greasy table was a pewter porter-pot, and to the left a teaspoon glittering in a glass of gin; close to each of these two delicacies was a pipe of tobacco; and behind the pipes sat Mr. Gann and Mr. Swigby, who now made the "Half-Moon and Snuffers" their usual place of resort, and forgot their married cares.

In spite of all our promises of brevity, these things have taken some space to describe; and the reader must also know that some short interval elapsed ere they occurred. A month at least passed away before Mr. Swigby had decidedly taken up his position at the little inn: all this time, Gann was staying with his son-in-law, at the latter's most earnest request; and Mrs. Gann remained under the same roof at her own desire. Not the hints of her daughter, nor the broad questions of the dowager Mrs. Swigby, could induce honest Mrs. Gann to stir from her quarters. She had had her lodgers' money in advance, as was the worthy woman's custom;

Digitized by Google

she knew Margate in April was dreadfully dull, and she determined to enjoy the country until the jovial town season arrived. The Canterbury coachman, whom Gann knew, and who passed through the village, used to take her cargo of novels to and fro; and the old lady made herself as happy as circumstances would allow. Should anything of importance occur during her mamma's absence, Caroline was to make use of the same conveyance, and inform Mrs. Gann in a letter.

Miss Caroline looked at her papa and mamma, as the vehicle which was to bear them to the newly married couple moved up the street; but, strange to say, she did not feel that heaviness of heart which she before had experienced when forbidden to share the festivities of her family, but was on this occasion more happy than any one of them,—so happy, that the young woman felt quite ashamed of herself; and Becky was fain to remark how her mistress's cheek flushed, and her eyes sparkled (and turned perpetually to the door), and her whole little frame was in a flutter.

"I wonder if he will come," said the little heart; and the eyes turned and looked at that well-known sofa-corner, where *he* had been placed a fortnight before. He looked exactly like Lord Byron, that he did, with his pale brow, and his slim bare neck; only not half so wicked — no, no. She was sure that her — her Mr. B——, her Bran——, her *George*, was as good as he was beautiful. Don't let us be angry with her for calling him George; the girl was bred in an humble sentimental school; she did not know enough of society to be squeamish; she never thought that she could be his really, and gave way in the silence of her fancy to the full extent of her affection for him.

She had not looked at the door above twenty-five times — that is to say, her parents had not quitted the

Digitized by Google

house ten minutes — when, sure enough, the latch did rattle, the door opened, and, with a faint blush on his cheek, divine George entered. He was going to make some excuse, as on the former occasion; but he looked first into Caroline's face, which was beaming with joy and smiles; and the little thing, in return, regarded him, and — made room for him on the sofa. O sweet instinct of love! Brandon had no need of excuses, but sate down, and talked away as easily, happily, and confidentially, and neither took any note of time. Andrea Fitch (the sly dog!) witnessed the Gann departure with feelings of exultation, and had laid some deep plans of his own with regard to Miss Caroline. So strong was his confidence in his friend on the first floor, that Andrea actually descended to those apartments, on his way to Mrs. Gann's parlour, in order to consult Mr. Brandon, and make known to him his plan of operations.

It would have made your heart break, or, at the very least, your sides ache, to behold the countenance of poor Mr. Fitch, as he thrust his bearded head in at the door of the parlour. There was Brandon lolling on the sofa, at his ease; Becky in full good-humour; and Caroline, always absurdly inclined to blush, blushing at Fitch's appearance more than ever! She could not help looking from him slyly and gently into the face of Mr. Brandon. That gentleman saw the look, and did not fail to interpret it. It was a confession of love — an appeal for protection. A thrill of delightful vanity shot through Brandon's frame, and made his heart throb, as he noticed this look of poor Caroline. He answered it with one of his own that was cruelly wrong, cruelly triumphant, and sarcastic; and he shouted out to Mr. Fitch, with a loud, disconcerted tone, which only made that young painter feel more awkward than ever he had been. Fitch made some clumsy speech regarding his

Digitized by Google

dinner, — whether that meal was to be held, in the absence of the parents, at the usual hour, and then took his leave.

The poor fellow had been pleasing himself with the notion of taking this daily meal *tête-à-tête* with Caroline. What progress would he make in her heart during the absence of her parents! Did it not seem as if the first marriage had been arranged on purpose to facilitate his own? He determined thus his plan of campaign. He would make, in the first place, the most beautiful drawing of Caroline that ever was seen. "The conversations I'll 'ave with her during the sittings," says he, "will carry me a pretty long way; the drawing itself will be so beautiful, that she can't resist that. I'll write her verses in her halbum, and make designs hallusive of my passion for her." And so our pictorial Alnaschar dreamed and dreamed. He had, ere long, established himself in a house in Newman Street, with a footman to open the door. Caroline was upstairs, his wife, and her picture the crack portrait of the Exhibition. With her by his side, Andrea Fitch felt he could do anything. Half-a-dozen carriages at his door, — a hundred guineas for a Kit-Cat portrait, Lady Fitch, Sir Andrew Fitch, the President's chain, — all sorts of bright visions floated before his imagination; and as Caroline was the first precious condition of his preferment, he determined forthwith to begin, and realise that.

But O disappointment! on coming down to dinner at three o'clock to that charming *tête-à-tête*, he found no less than four covers laid on the table, Miss Caroline blushing (according to custom) at the head of it; Becky, the maid, grinning at the foot; and Mr. Brandon sitting quietly on one side, as much at home, forsooth, as if he had held that position for a year.

Digitized by Google

The fact is, that the moment after Fitch retired, Brandon, inspired by jealousy, had made the same request which had been brought forward by the painter; nor must the ladies be too angry with Caroline, if, after some scruples and struggles, she yielded to the proposal. Remember that the girl was the daughter of a boarding-house, accustomed to continual dealings with her mamma's lodgers, and up to the present moment thinking herself as safe among them as the young person who walked through Ireland with a bright gold wand, in the song of Mr. Thomas Moore. On the point, however, of Brandon's admission, it must be confessed, for Caroline's honour, that she did hesitate. She felt that she entertained very different feelings towards him to those with which any other lodger or man had inspired her, and made a little movement of resistance at first. But the poor girl's modesty overcame this, as well as her wish. Ought she to avoid him? Ought she not to stifle any preference which she might feel towards him, and act towards him with the same indifference which she would show to any other person in a like situation? Was not Mr. Fitch to dine at table as usual, and had she refused him? So reasoned she in her heart. Silly little cunning heart! it knew that all these reasons were lies, and that she *should* avoid the man; but she was willing to accept of any pretext for meeting, and so made a kind of compromise with her conscience. Dine he should; but Becky should dine too, and be a protector to her. Becky laughed loudly at the idea of this, and took her place with huge delight.

It is needless to say a word about this dinner, as we have already described a former meal; suffice it to say, that the presence of Brandon caused the painter to be excessively sulky and uncomfortable; and so gave his rival, who was gay, triumphant, and at his ease, a de-

Digitized by Google

cided advantage over him. Nor did Brandon neglect to use this to the utmost. When Fitch retired to his own apartments — not jealous as yet, for the simple fellow believed every word of Brandon's morning conversation with him — but vaguely annoyed and disappointed, Brandon assailed him with all the force of ridicule; at all his manners, words, looks, he joked mercilessly; laughed at his low birth, (Miss Gann, be it remembered, had been taught to pique herself upon her own family,) and invented a series of stories concerning his past life which made the ladies — for Becky, being in the parlour, must be considered as such — conceive the greatest contempt and pity for the poor painter.

After this, Mr. Brandon would expatiate with much eloquence upon his own superior attractions and qualities. He talked of his cousin, Lord So-and-so, with the easiest air imaginable; told Caroline what princesses he had danced with at foreign courts; frightened her with accounts of dreadful duels he had fought; in a word, "posed" before her as a hero of the most sublime kind. How the poor little thing drank in all his tales; and how she and Becky (for they now occupied the same bed-room) talked over them at night!

Miss Caroline, as Mr. Fitch has already stated, had in her possession, like almost every young lady in England, a little square book called an album, containing prints from annuals; hideous designs of flowers; old pictures of faded fashions, cut out and pasted into the leaves; and small scraps of verses selected from Byron, Landon, or Mrs. Hemans; and written out in the girlish hand of the owner of the book. Brandon looked over this work with a good deal of curiosity — for he contended, always, that a girl's disposition might be learned from the character of this museum of hers — and found here several sketches by Mr. Fitch, for which, before that

Digitized by Google

gentleman had declared his passion for her, Caroline had begged. These sketches the sentimental painter had illustrated with poetry, which, I must confess, Caroline thought charming, until now, when Mr. Brandon took occasion to point out how wretchedly poor the verses were (as indeed was the fact), and to parody them all. He was not unskilful at this kind of exercise, and at the drawing of caricatures, and had soon made a dozen of both parodies and drawings, which reflected cruelly upon the person and the talents of the painter.

What now did this wicked Mr. Brandon do? He, in the first place, drew a caricature of Fitch; and, secondly, having gone to a gardener's near the town, and purchased there a bunch of violets, he presented them to Miss Caroline, and wrote Mr. Fitch's own verses before given into her album. He signed them with his own initials, and thus declared open war with the painter.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER VII

WHICH BRINGS A GREAT NUMBER OF PEOPLE TO MARGATE BY THE STEAMBOAT

THE events which this history records began in the month of February. Time had now passed, and April had arrived, and with it that festive season so loved by schoolboys, and called the Easter holidays. Not only schoolboys, but men, profit by this period of leisure, — such men, especially, as have just come into enjoyment of their own cups and saucers, and are in daily expectation of their whiskers — college men, I mean, — who are persons more anxious than any others to designate themselves and each other by the manly title.

Among other men, then, my Lord Viscount Cinqbars, of Christ Church, Oxon, received a sum of money to pay his quarter's bill, and having written to his papa that he was busily engaged in reading for the "little-go," and must, therefore, decline the delight he had promised himself of passing the vacation at Cinqbars Hall, — and having, the day after his letter was despatched, driven to town tandem with young Tom Tufthunt, of the same university, — and having exhausted the pleasures of the metropolis — the theatres, the Cider-cellars, the Finish, the station-houses, and other places which need by no means be here particularised, — Lord Cinqbars, I say, growing tired of London at the end of ten days, quitted the metropolis

Digitized by Google

somewhat suddenly: nor did he pay his hotel bill at Long's before his departure; but he left that document in possession of the landlord, as a token of his (my Lord Cinqbars') confidence in his host.

Tom Tufthunt went with my lord, of course (although of an aristocratic turn in politics, Tom loved and respected a lord as much as any democrat in England). And whither do you think this worthy pair of young gentlemen were bound? To no less a place than Margate; for Cinqbars was filled with a longing to go and see his old friend Brandon, and determined, to use his own elegant words, "to knock the old buck up."

There was no adventure of consequence on board the steamer which brought Lord Cinqbars and his friend from London to Margate, and very few passengers besides. A wandering Jew or two were set down at Gravesend; the Rev. Mr. Wackerbart, and six unhappy little pupils whom the reverend gentleman had pounced upon in London, and was carrying back to his academy near Herne Bay; some of those inevitable persons of dubious rank who seem to have free tickets, and always eat and drink hugely with the captain; and a lady and her party, formed the whole list of passengers.

The lady — a very fat lady — had evidently just returned from abroad. Her great green travelling-chariot was on the deck, and on all her imperials were pasted fresh large bills, with the words INCE'S BRITISH HOTEL, BOULOGNE-SUR-MER; for it is the custom of that worthy gentleman to seize upon and plaster all the luggage of his guests with tickets, on which his name and residence are inscribed, — by which simple means he keeps himself perpetually in their recollection, and brings himself to the notice of all other persons who are in the habit of peering at their fellow-passengers' trunks, to find out their names. I need not say what a large class this is.

Digitized by Google

Well; this fat lady had a courier, a tall whiskered man, who spoke all languages, looked like a field-marshal, went by the name of Donnerwetter, and rode on the box; a French maid, Mademoiselle Augustine; and a little black page, called Saladin, who rode in the rumble. Saladin's whole business was to attend a wheezy, fat, white poodle, who usually travelled inside with his mistress and her fair *compagnon de voyage*, whose name was Miss Runt. This fat lady was evidently a person of distinction. During the first part of the voyage, on a windy, sunshiny April day, she paced the deck stoutly, leaning on the arm of poor little Miss Runt; and after they had passed Gravesend, when the vessel began to pitch a good deal, retired to her citadel, the travelling-chariot, to and from which the steward, the stewardess, and the whiskered courier were continually running with supplies — of sandwiches first, and afterwards of very hot brandy-and-water: for the truth must be told, it was rather a rough afternoon, and the poodle was sick; Saladin was as bad; the French maid, like all French maids, was outrageously ill; the lady herself was very unwell indeed; and poor dear sympathising Runt was qualmish.

"Ah, Runt!" would the fat lady say in the intervals, "what a thing this malady de mare is! Oh, mong jew! Oh — oh!"

"It is, indeed, dear madam," said Runt, and went "Oh — oh!" in chorus.

"Ask the steward if we are near Margate, Runt." And Runt did, and asked this question every five minutes, as people do on these occasions.

"Issy Monsieur Donnerwetter: ally dimandy ung pew d'o sho poor mwaw."

"Et de l'eau de fie afec, n'est-ce-bas, Matame?" said Mr. Donnerwetter.

Digitized by Google

"Wee, wee, comme vous vouly."

And Donnerwetter knew very well what "comme vous vouly" meant, and brought the liquor exactly in the wished-for state.

"Ah, Runt, Runt! there's something even worse than sea-sickness. Heigh-ho!"

"Dear, dear Marianne, don't flutter yourself," cries Runt, squeezing a fat paw of her friend and patroness between her own bony fingers. "Don't agitate your nerves, dear. I know you're miserable; but haven't you got a friend in your faithful Runty?"

"You're a good creater, that you are," said the fat lady, who seemed herself to be a good-humoured old soul; "and I don't know what I should have done without you. Heigh-ho!"

"Cheer up, dear! you'll be happier when you get to Margate: you know you will," cried Runt, very knowingly.

"What do you mean, Elizabeth?"

"You know very well, dear Marianne. I mean that there's some one there will make you happy; though he's a nasty wretch, that he is, to have treated my darling, beautiful Marianne so."

"Runt, Runt, don't abuse that best of men. Don't call me beautiful — I'm not, Runt; I have been, but I ain't now; and oh! no woman in the world is assy bong poor lui."

"But an angel is; and you are, as you always was, an angel, — as good as an angel, as kind as an angel, as beautifulas o ne."

"Ally dong," said her companion, giving her a push; "you flatter me, Runt, you know you do."

"May I be struck down dead if I don't say the truth; and if he refuses you, as he did at Rome, — that is, after all his attentions and vows, he's faithless to you, — I say

Digitized by Google

he 's a wretch, that he is; and I *will* say he 's a wretch, and he *is* a wretch — a nasty, wicked wretch!"

"Elizabeth, if you say that, you 'll break my heart, you will! Vous casserez mong pover cure." But Elizabeth swore, on the contrary, that she would die for her Marianne, which consoled the fat lady a little.

A great deal more of this kind of conversation took place during the voyage; but as it occurred inside a carriage, so that to hear it was very difficult, and as possibly it was not of that edifying nature which would induce the reader to relish many chapters of it, we shall give no further account of the ladies' talk: suffice it to say, that about half-past four o'clock the journey ended, by the vessel bringing up at Margate Pier. The passengers poured forth, and hied to their respective homes or inns. My Lord Cinqbars and his companion (of whom we have said nothing, as they on their sides had scarcely spoken a word the whole way, except "deuce-ace," "quater-tray," "sizes," and so on, — being occupied ceaselessly in drinking bottled stout and playing backgammon,) ordered their luggage to be conveyed to "Wright's Hotel," whither the fat lady and suite followed them. The house was vacant, and the best rooms in it were placed, of course, at the service of the new comers. The fat lady sailed out of her bed-room towards her saloon, just as Lord Cinqbars, cigar in mouth, was swaggering out of his parlour. They met in the passage; when, to the young lord's surprise, the fat lady dropped him a low curtsey, and said, —

"Munseer le Vecomte de Cinqbars, sharmy de vous voir. Vous vous rappelez de mwaw, n'est-ce pas? Je vous ai vew à Rome — shay l'ambassadure, vous savy."

Lord Cinqbars stared her in the face, and pushed by her without a word, leaving the fat lady rather disconcerted.

Digitized by Google

"Well, Runt, I'm sure," said she, "he need not be so proud; I've met him twenty times at Rome, when he was a young chap with his tutor."

"Who the devil can that fat foreigner be?" mused Lord Cinqbars. "Hang her, I've seen her somewhere; but I'm cursed if I understand a word of her jabber." And so, dismissing the subject, he walked on to Brandon's.

"Dang it, it's a strange thing!" said the landlord of the hotel; "but both my lord and the fat woman in number nine have asked their way to Mother Gann's lodging," — for so did he dare to call that respectable woman!

It was true: as soon as number nine had eaten her dinner, she asked the question mentioned by the landlord; and, as this meal occupied a considerable time, the shades of evening had by this time fallen upon the quiet city; the silver moon lighted up the bay, and, supported by a numerous and well-appointed train of gas-lamps, illuminated the streets of a town, — of autumn eves so crowded and so gay; of gusty April nights, so desolate. At this still hour (it might be half-past seven,) two ladies passed the gates of "Wright's Hotel," "in shrouding mantle wrapped, and velvet cap." Up the deserted High Street toiled they, by gaping rows of empty bathing-houses, by melancholy Jolly's French bazaar, by mouldy pastrycooks, blank reading-rooms, by fishmongers who never sold a fish, mercers who vended not a yard of riband — because, as yet, the season was not come, — and Jews and Cockneys still remained in town. At High Street's corner, near to Hawley Square, they passed the house of Mr. Fincham, chemist, who doth not only healthful drugs supply, but likewise sells cigars — the worst cigars that ever mortal man gave threepence for.

Digitized by Google

Up to this point, I say, I have had a right to accompany the fat lady and Miss Runt; but whether, on arriving at Mr. Fincham's, they turned to the left, in the direction of the "Royal Hotel," or to the right, by the beach, the bathing-machines, and queer rickety old row of houses, called Buenos Ayres, no power on earth shall induce me to say; suffice it, they went to Mrs. Gann's. Why should we set all the world gadding to a particular street, to know where that lady lives? They arrived before that lady's house at about eight o'clock. Every house in the street had bills on it except hers (bitter mockery, as if anybody came down at Easter!) and at Mrs. Gann's house there was a light in the garret, and another in the two-pair front. I believe I have not mentioned before, that all the front windows were bow or bay-windows; but so much the reader may know.

The two ladies, who had walked so far, examined wistfully the plate on the door, stood on the steps for a short time, retreated, and conversed with one another.

"Oh, Runty!" said the stouter of the two, "he's here — I know he's here, mong cure le dee — my heart tells me so." And she put a large hand upon a place on her left side, where there once had been a waist.

"Do you think he looks front or back, dear?" asked Runt. "P'raps he's not at home."

"That — that's his croisy," said the stout person; "I know it is;" and she pointed with instinctive justice to the two-pair. "Ecouty!" she added, "he's coming; there's some one at that window. Oh, mong jew, mong jew! c'est André, c'est lui!"

The moon was shining full on the face of the bow-windows of Mrs. Gann's house; and the two fair spies, who were watching on the other side, were, in consequence, completely in shadow. As the lady said, a

Digitized by Google

dark form was seen in the two-pair front; it paced the room for a while, for no blinds were drawn. It then flung itself on a chair; its head on its hands; it then began to beat its brows wildly, and paced the room again. Ah! how the fat lady's heart throbbed as she looked at all this!

She gave a piercing shriek — almost fainted! and little Runt's knees trembled under her, as with all her might she supported, or rather pushed up, the falling figure of her stout patroness, — who saw at that instant Fitch come to the candle with an immense pistol in his hand, and give a most horrible grin as he looked at it, and clasped it to his breast.

"Unhand me, Runt; he's going to kill himself! It's for me! I know it is — I will go to him! Andrea, my Andrea!" And the fat lady was pushing for the opposite side of the way, when suddenly the second-floor window went clattering up, and Fitch's pale head was thrust out.

He had heard a scream, and had possibly been induced to open the window in consequence; but by the time he had opened it he had forgotten everything, and put his head vacantly out of the window, and gazed, the moon shining cold on his pale features.

"Pallid horb!" said Fitch, "shall I ever see thy light again? Will another night see me on this hearth, or view me, stark and cold, a lifeless corpse?" He took his pistol up, and slowly aimed it at a chimney-pot opposite. Fancy the fat lady's sensations, as she beheld her lover standing in the moonlight, and exercising this deadly weapon.

"Make ready — present — fire!" shouted Fitch, and did instantaneously, not fire off, but lower his weapon. "The bolt of death is sped!" continued he, clapping

Digitized by Google

his hand on his side. "The poor painter's life is over! Caroline, Caroline, I die for thee!"

"Runt, Runt, I told you so!" shrieked the fat lady. "He is dying for me, and Caroline 's my second name."

What the fat lady would have done more, I can't say; for Fitch, disturbed out of his reverie by her talking below, looked out, frowning vacantly, and saying, "Ulloh! we 've hinterlopers 'ere!" suddenly banged down the window, and pulled down the blinds.

This gave a check to the fat lady's projected rush, and disconcerted her a little. But she was consoled by Miss Runt, promised to return on the morrow, and went home happy in the idea that her Andrea was faithful to her.

Alas, poor fat lady! little did you know the truth. It was Caroline Gann Fitch was raving about; and it was a part of his last letter to her, to be delivered after his death, that he was spouting out of the window.

Was the crazy painter going to fight a duel, or was he going to kill himself? This will be explained in the next chapter.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER VIII

WHICH TREATS OF WAR AND LOVE, AND MANY THINGS THAT ARE NOT TO BE UNDERSTOOD IN CHAP. VII

FITCH'S verses, inserted in a previous chapter of this story, (and of which lines, by the way, the printer managed to make still greater nonsense than the ingenious bard ever designed,) had been composed many years before; and it was with no small trouble and thought that the young painter called the greater part of them to memory again, and furbished up a copy for Caroline's album. Unlike the love of most men, Andrea's passion was not characterised by jealousy and watchfulness, otherwise he would not have failed to perceive certain tokens of intelligence passing from time to time between Caroline and Brandon, and the lady's evident coldness to himself. The fact is, the painter was in love with being in love, — entirely absorbed in the consideration of the fact that he, Andrea Fitch, was at last enamoured; and he did not mind his mistress much more than Don Quixote did Dulcinea del Toboso.

Having rubbed up his verses, then, and designed a pretty emblematical outline which was to surround them, representing an arabesque of violets, dewdrops, fairies, and other objects, he came down one morning, drawing in hand; and having informed Caroline, who was sitting very melancholy in the parlour, preoccupied, with a pale face and red eyes, and not caring twopence for the finest drawing in the world, — having informed

Digitized by Google

her that he was going to make in her halbum a humble hoffering of his hart, poor Fitch was just on the point of sticking in the drawing with gum, as painters know very well how to do, when his eye lighted upon a page of the album, in which nestled a few dried violets and — his own verses, signed with the name of George Brandon.

"Miss Caroline — Miss Gann, mam!" shrieked Fitch, in a tone of voice which made the young lady start out of a profound reverie, and cry, nervously, — "What in heaven is the matter?"

"These verses, madam — a faded violet — word for word, gracious 'eavens! every word!" roared Fitch, advancing with the book.

She looked at him rather vacantly, and as the violets caught her eye, put out her hand, and took them. "Do you know the hawthor, Miss Gann, of 'The faded Violets?'"

"Author? O yes; they are — they are George's!" she burst into tears as she said that word; and, pulling the little faded flowers to pieces, went sobbing out of the room.

Dear, dear little Caroline! she has only been in love two months, and is already beginning to feel the woes of it!

It cannot be from want of experience — for I have felt the noble passion of love many times these forty years, since I was a boy of twelve (by which the reader may form a pretty good guess of my age), — it cannot be, I say, from want of experience that I am unable to describe, step by step, the progress of a love-affair; nay, I am perfectly certain that I could, if I chose, make a most astonishing and heart-rending *liber amoris;* but, nevertheless, I always feel a vast repugnance to the following out of a subject of this kind, which I attribute to

Digitized by Google

a natural diffidence and sense of shame that prevent me from enlarging on a theme that has in it something sacred — certain arcana which an honest man, although initiated into them, should not divulge.

If such coy scruples and blushing delicacy prevent one from passing the threshold even of an honourable love, and setting down, at so many guineas or shillings per page, the pious emotions and tendernesses of two persons chastely and legally engaged in sighing, ogling, hand-squeezing, kissing, and so forth (for with such outward signs I believe that the passion of love is expressed), — if a man feel, I say, squeamish about describing an innocent love, he is doubly disinclined to describe a guilty one; and I have always felt a kind of loathing for the skill of such geniuses as Rousseau or Richardson, who could paint with such painful accuracy all the struggles and woes of Eloise and Clarissa, — all the wicked arts and triumphs of such scoundrels as Lovelace.

We have in this history a scoundrelly Lovelace in the person going by the name of George Brandon, and a dear, tender, innocent, yielding creature on whom he is practising his infernal skill; and whether the public feel any sympathy for her or not, the writer can only say, for his part, that he heartily loves and respects poor little Caroline, and is quite unwilling to enter into any of the slow, painful, wicked details of the courtship which passed between her and her lover.

Not that there was any wickedness on *her* side, poor girl! or that she did anything but follow the natural and beautiful impulses of an honest little female heart, that leads it to trust and love, and worship a being of the other sex, whom the eager fancy invests with all sorts of attributes of superiority. There was no wild, conceited tale that Brandon told Caroline which

Digitized by Google

she did not believe,— no virtue which she could conceive or had read of in novels with which she did not endow him. Many long talks had they, and many sweet, stolen interviews, during the periods in which Caroline's father and mother were away making merry at the house of their son-in-law; and while she was left under the care of her virtue and of Becky the maid. Indeed, it was a blessing that the latter was left in the joint guardianship. For Becky, who had such an absurd opinion of her young lady's merits as to fancy that she was a fit wife for any gentleman of the land, and that any gentleman might be charmed and fall in love with her, had some instinct, or possibly some experience, as to the passions and errors of youth, and warned Caroline accordingly. "If he 's really in love, Miss, and I think he be, he 'll marry you; if he won't marry you, he 's a rascal, and you 're too good for him, and must have nothing to do with him." To which Caroline replied, that she was sure Mr. Brandon was the most angelic, high-principled of human beings, and that she was sure his intentions were of the most honourable description.

We have before described what Mr. Brandon's character was. He was not a man of honourable intentions at all. But he was a gentleman of so excessively eager a temperament, that if properly resisted by a practised coquette, or by a woman of strong principles, he would sacrifice anything to obtain his ends, — nay, marry to obtain them; and, considering his disposition, it is only a wonder that he had not been married a great number of times already; for he had been in love perpetually since his seventeenth year. By which the reader may pretty well appreciate the virtue or the prudence of the ladies with whom hitherto our inflammable young gentleman had had to do.

Digitized by Google

The fruit, then, of all his stolen interviews, of all his prayers, vows, and protestations to Caroline, had been only this, — that she loved him; but loved him as an honest girl should, and was ready to go to the altar with him when he chose. He talked about his family, his peculiar circumstances, his proud father's curse. Little Caroline only sighed, and said her dearest George must wait until he could obtain his parent's consent. When pressed harder, she would burst into tears, and wonder how one so good and affectionate as he could propose to her anything unworthy of them both. It is clear to see that the young lady had read a vast number of novels, and knew something of the nature of love; and that she had a good principle and honesty of her own, which set her lover's schemes at naught: indeed, she had both these advantages, — her education, such as it was, having given her the one, and her honest nature having endowed her with the other.

On the day when Fitch came down to Caroline with his verses, Brandon had pressed these unworthy propositions upon her. She had torn herself violently away from him, and rushed to the door; but the poor little thing fell before she could reach it, screaming in a fit of hysterics, which brought Becky to her aid, and caused Brandon to leave her, abashed. He went out; she watched him go, and stole up into his room, and laid on his table the first letter she had ever written to him. It was written in pencil, in a trembling, school-girl hand, and contained simply the following words: —

"George, you have almost broken my heart. Leave me if you will, and if you dare not act like an honest man. If ever you speak to me so again as you did this morning, I declare solemnly before heaven, I will take poison.

"C."

Digitized by Google

Indeed, the poor thing had read romances to some purpose; without them, it is probable, she never would have thought of such a means of escape from a lover's persecutions; and there was something in the girl's character that made Brandon feel sure that she would keep her promise. How the words agitated him! He felt a violent mixture of raging disappointment and admiration, and loved the girl ten thousand times more than ever.

Mr. Brandon had scarcely finished the reading of this document, and was yet agitated by the various passions which the perusal of it created, when the door of his apartment was violently flung open, and some one came in. Brandon started, and turned round, with a kind of dread that Caroline had already executed her threat, and that a messenger was come to inform him of her death. Mr. Andrea Fitch was the intruder. His hat was on — his eyes were glaring; and if the beards of men did stand on end anywhere but in poems and romances, his, no doubt, would have formed round his countenance a bristling auburn halo. As it was, Fitch only looked astonishingly fierce, as he stalked up to the table, his hands behind his back. When he had arrived at this barrier between himself and Mr. Brandon, he stopped, and, speechless, stared that gentleman in the face.

"May I beg, Mr. Fitch, to know what has procured me the honour of this visit?" exclaimed Mr. Brandon, after a brief pause of wonder.

"Honour! — ha, ha, ha!" growled Mr. Fitch, in a most sardonic, discordant way — "*honour!*"

"Well, sir, honour or no honour, I can tell you, my good man, it certainly is no pleasure!" said Brandon, testily. "In plain English, then, what the devil has brought you here?"

Digitized by Google

Fitch plumped the album down on the table close to Mr. Brandon's nose, and said, "*That* has brought me, sir — that halbum, sir; or, I ask your pardon, that a— album — ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, I see!" said Mr. Brandon, who could not refrain from a smile. "It was a cruel trick of mine, Fitch, to rob you of your verses; but all 's fair in love."

"Fitch, sir! don't Fitch me, sir! I wish to be hintimate honly with men of h-honour, not with forgers, sir; not with 'artless miscreants! Miscreants, sir, I repeat; vipers, sir; b—b—b— blackguards, sir!"

"Blackguards, sir!" roared Mr. Brandon, bouncing up; "blackguards, you dirty cockney mountebank! Quit the room, sir, or I 'll fling you out of the window!"

"Will you, sir? try, sir; I wish you may get it, sir. I 'm a hartist, sir, and as good a man as you. Miscreant, forger, traitor, come on!"

And Mr. Brandon *would* have come on, but for a circumstance that deterred him; and this was, that Mr. Fitch drew from his bosom a long, sharp, shining, waving poniard of the middle ages, that formed a part of his artistical properties, and with which he had armed himself for this encounter.

"Come on, sir!" shrieked Fitch, brandishing this fearful weapon. "Lay a finger on me, and I bury this blade in your treacherous 'art. Ha! do you tremble?"

Indeed, the aristocratic Mr. Brandon turned somewhat pale.

"Well, well," said he, "what do you want? Do you suppose I am to be bullied by your absurd melodramatic airs! It was, after all, but a joke, sir, and I am sorry that it has offended you. Can I say more? — what shall I do?"

"You shall hapologise; not only to me, sir, but you shall tell Miss Caroline, in my presence, that you stole

Digitized by Google

those verses from me, and used them quite unauthorised by me."

"Look you, Mr. Fitch, I will make you another set of verses quite as good, if you like; but what you ask is impossible."

"I will 'asten myself, then, to Miss Caroline, and acquaint her with your dastardly forgery, sir. I will hopen her heyes, sir!"

"You may hopen her heyes, as you call them, if you please: but I tell you fairly, that the young lady will credit me rather than you; and if you swear ever so much that the verses are yours, I must say that ——"

"Say what, sir?"

"Say that you *lie* sir!" said Mr. Brandon, stamping on the ground. "I 'll make you other verses, I repeat; but this is all I can do, and now go about your business!"

"Curse your verses, sir! liar and forger yourself! Hare you a coward as well, sir? A coward! yes, I believe you are; or will you meet me to-morrow morning like a man, and give me satisfaction for this hinfamous hinsult?"

"Sir," said Mr. Brandon, with the utmost stateliness and scorn, "if you wish to murder me as you do the king's English, I won't balk you. Although a man of my rank is not called upon to meet a blackguard of your condition, I will, nevertheless, grant you your will. But have a care; by heavens, I won't spare you, and I can hit an ace of hearts at twenty paces!"

"Two can play at that," said Mr. Fitch, calmly; "and if I can't hit a hace of 'arts at twenty paces, I can hit a man at twelve, and to-morrow I 'll try." With which, giving Mr. Brandon a look of the highest contempt, the young painter left the room.

What were Mr. Brandon's thoughts as his antagonist left him? Strange to say, rather agreeable. He had

Digitized by Google

much too great a contempt for Fitch to suppose that so low a fellow would ever think seriously of fighting him, and reasoned with himself thus: —

"This Fitch, I know, will go off to Caroline, tell her the whole transaction, frighten her with the tale of a duel, and then she and I shall have a scene. I will tell her the truth about those infernal verses, menace death, blood, and danger, and then ——"

Here he fell back into a charming reverie; the wily fellow knew what power such a circumstance would give him over a poor weak girl, who would do anything rather than that her beloved should risk his life. And with this dastardly speculation as to the price he should ask for refraining from meeting Fitch, he was entertaining himself; when, much to his annoyance, that gentleman again came into the room.

"Mr. Brandon," said he, "you have insulted me in the grossest and cruellest way."

"Well, sir, are you come to apologise?" said Brandon sneeringly.

"No, I 'm not come to apologise, Mr. Aristocrat: it 's past that. I 'm come to say this, sir, that I take you for a coward; and that, unless you will give me your solemn word of honour not to mention a word of this quarrel to Miss Gann, which might prevent our meeting, I will never leave you till we *do* fight!"

"This is outrageous, sir! Leave the room, or by heavens I 'll not meet you at all!"

"Heasy, sir; easy, I beg your pardon, I can force you to that!"

"And how, pray, sir?"

"Why, in the first place, here 's a stick, and I 'll 'orsewhip you; and here are a pair of pistols, and we can fight now!"

"Well, sir, I give you my honour," said Mr. Brandon,

Digitized by Google

in a diabolical rage; and added, "I'll meet you to-morrow, not now; and you need not be afraid that I'll miss you!"

"Hadew, sir," said the chivalrous little Fitch; "bon giorno, sir, as we used to say at Rome." And so, for the second time, he left Mr. Brandon, who did not like very well the extraordinary courage he had displayed.

"What the deuce has exasperated the fellow so?" thought Brandon.

Why, in the first place, he had crossed Fitch in love; and, in the second, he had sneered at his pronunciation and his gentility, and Fitch's little soul was in a fury which nothing but blood would allay: he was determined, for the sake of his hart and his lady, to bring this proud champion down.

So Brandon was at last left to his cogitations; when, confusion! about five o'clock came another knock at his door.

"Come in!" growled the owner of the lodgings.

A sallow, blear-eyed, rickety, undersized creature, tottering upon a pair of high-heeled lacquered boots, and supporting himself upon an immense gold-knobbed cane, entered the room with his hat on one side and a jaunty air. It was a white hat with a broad brim, and under it fell a great deal of greasy lank hair, that shrouded the cheek-bones of the wearer. The little man had no beard to his chin, appeared about twenty years of age, and might weigh, stick and all, some seven stone. If you wish to know how this exquisite was dressed, I have the pleasure to inform you that he wore a great sky-blue embroidered satin stock, in the which figured a carbuncle that looked like a lambent gooseberry. He had a shawl-waistcoat of many colours; a pair of loose blue trousers, neatly strapped to show his little feet: a brown cut-away coat with brass buttons,

Digitized by Google

that fitted tight round a spider waist; and over all a white or drab surtout, with a sable collar and cuffs, from which latter on each hand peeped five little fingers covered with lemon-coloured kid gloves. One of these hands he held constantly to his little chest: and, with a hoarse thin voice, he piped out,

"George my buck! how goes it?"

We have been thus particular in our description of the costume of this individual (whose inward man strongly corresponded with his manly and agreeable exterior), because he was the person whom Mr. Brandon most respected in the world.

"CINQBARS!" exclaimed our hero: "why, what the deuce has brought you to Margate?"

"Fwendship, my old cock!" said the Honourable Augustus Frederick Ringwood, commonly called Viscount Cinqbars, for indeed it was he. "Fwendship and the *City of Canterbuwy* steamer!" and herewith his lordship held out his right-hand forefinger to Brandon, who enclosed it most cordially in all his. "Wath n't it good of me, now, George, to come down and conthole you in thith curthed, thtupid place — hay now?" said my lord, after these salutations.

Brandon swore he was very glad to see him, which was very true, for he had no sooner set his eyes upon his lordship, than he had determined to borrow as much money from him as ever he could induce the young nobleman to part with.

"I'll tell you how it wath, my boy: you thee I wath thtopping at Long'th, when I found, by Jove, that the governor wath come to town! Cuth me if I did n't meet the infarnal old family dwag, with my mother, thithterth, and all, ath I wath dwiving a hack-cab with Polly Tomkinth in the Pawk! Tho when I got home, 'Hang it!' thayth I to Tufthunt, 'Tom my boy,' thaith

7

Digitized by Google

I, 'I've just theen the governor, and must be off!' 'What, back to Ockthford?' thaith Tom. 'No,' thaith I, 'that *won't* do. Abroad — to Jewicho — anywhere. Egad, I have it! I'll go down to Margate and thee old George, that I will.' And tho off I came the very next day; and here I am, and there 'th dinner waiting for uth at the hotel, and thixth bottleth of champagne in ithe, and thum thalmon: tho you mutht come."

To this proposition Mr. Brandon readily agreed, being glad enough of the prospect of a good dinner and some jovial society, for he was low and disturbed in spirits, and so promised to dine with his friend at the "Sun."

The two gentlemen conversed for some time longer. Mr. Brandon was a shrewd fellow, and knew perfectly well a fact of which, no doubt, the reader has a notion — namely, that Lord Cinqbars was a ninny; but, nevertheless, Brandon esteemed him highly as a lord. We pardon stupidity in lords; nature or instinct, however sarcastic a man may be among ordinary persons, renders him towards men of quality benevolently blind: a divinity hedges not only the king, but the whole peerage.

"That's the girl, I suppose," said my lord, knowingly winking at Brandon: "that little pale girl, who let me in, I mean. A nice little filly, upon my honour, Georgy my buck!"

"Oh — that — yes — I wrote, I think, something about her," said Brandon, blushing slightly; for, indeed, he now began to wish that his friend should make no comments upon a young lady with whom he was so much in love.

"I suppose it's all up now?" continued my lord, looking still more knowing. "All over with her, hay? I saw it was by her looks, in a minute."

"Indeed you do me a great deal too much honour.

Digitized by Google

Miss — ah, — Miss Gann is a very respectable young person, and I would not for the world have you to suppose that I would do anything that should the least injure her character."

At this speech, Lord Cinqbars was at first much puzzled; but, in considering it, was fully convinced that Brandon was a deeper dog than ever. Boiling with impatience to know the particulars of this delicate intrigue, this cunning diplomatist determined he would pump the whole story out of Brandon by degrees; and so, in the course of half an hour's conversation that the young men had together, Cinqbars did not make less than forty allusions to the subject that interested him. At last Brandon cut him short rather haughtily, by begging that he would make no further allusions to the subject, as it was one that was excessively disagreeable to him.

In fact, there was no mistake about it now. George Brandon was in love with Caroline. He felt that he was while he blushed at his friend's alluding to her, while he grew indignant at the young lord's coarse banter about her.

Turning the conversation to another point, he asked Cinqbars about his voyage, and whether he had brought any companion with him to Margate; whereupon my lord related all his feats in London, how he had been to the watchhouse, how many bottles of champagne he had drunk, how he had "milled" a policeman, &c. &c.; and he concluded by saying that he had come down with Tom Tufthunt, who was at the inn at that very moment smoking a cigar.

This did not increase Brandon's good-humour; and when Cinqbars mentioned his friend's name, Brandon saluted it mentally with a hearty curse. These two gentlemen hated each other of old. Tufthunt was a

Digitized by Google

small college man of no family, with a foundation fellowship; and it used to be considered that a sporting fellow of a small college was a sad, raffish, disreputable character. Tufthunt, then, was a vulgar fellow, and Brandon a gentleman, so they hated each other. They were both toadies of the same nobleman, so they hated each other. They had had some quarrel at college about a disputed bet, which Brandon knew he owed, and so they hated each other; and in their words about it Brandon had threatened to horsewhip Tufthunt, and called him a "sneaking, swindling, small college snob;" and so little Tufthunt, who had not resented the words, hated Brandon far more than Brandon hated him. The latter only had a contempt for his rival, and voted him a profound bore and vulgarian.

So, although Mr. Tufthunt did not choose to frequent Mr. Brandon's rooms, he was very anxious that his friend, the young lord, should not fall into his old bear-leader's hands again, and came down to Margate to counteract any influence which the arts of Brandon might acquire.

"Curse the fellow!" thought Tufthunt in his heart (there was a fine reciprocity of curses between the two men); "he has drawn Cinqbars already for fifty pounds this year, and will have some half of his last remittance, if I don't keep a look-out, the swindling thief!"

And so frightened was Tufthunt at the notion of Brandon's return to power and dishonest use of it, that he was at the time on the point of writing to Lord Ringwood to tell him of his son's doings, only he wanted some money deucedly himself. Of Mr. Tufthunt's *physique* and history it is necessary merely to say, that he was the son of a country attorney who was agent to a lord; he had been sent to a foundation-school, where he distinguished himself for ten years, by fighting and being flogged

Digitized by Google

more than any boy of the five hundred. From the foundation-school he went to college with an exhibition, which was succeeded by a fellowship, which was to end in a living. In his person Mr. Tufthunt was short and bow-legged; he wore a sort of clerico-sporting costume, consisting of a black straight-cut coat and light drab breeches, with a vast number of buttons at the ankles; a sort of dress much affectioned by sporting gentlemen of the university in the author's time.

Well, Brandon said he had some letters to write, and promised to follow his friend, which he did; but, if the truth must be told, so infatuated was the young man become with his passion, with the resistance he had met with, and so nervous from the various occurrences of the morning, that he passed the half hour during which he was free from Cinqbars' society in kneeling, imploring, weeping at Caroline's little garret-door, which had remained pitilessly closed to him. He was wild with disappointment, mortification — mad, longing to see her. The cleverest coquette in Europe could not have so inflamed him. His first act on entering the dinner-room was to drink off a large tumbler of champagne; and when Cinqbars, in his elegant way, began to rally him upon his wildness, Mr. Brandon only growled and cursed with frightful vehemency, and applied again to the bottle. His face, which had been quite white, grew a bright red; his tongue, which had been tied, began to chatter vehemently; before the fish was off the table, Mr. Brandon showed strong symptoms of intoxication; before the dessert appeared, Mr. Tufthunt, winking knowingly to Lord Cinqbars, had begun to draw him out; and Brandon, with a number of shrieks and oaths, was narrating the history of his attachment.

"Look you, Tufthunt," said he, wildly; "hang you, I hate you, but I *must* talk! I've been, for two months

Digitized by Google

now, in this cursed hole; in a rickety lodging, with a vulgar family; as vulgar, by Jove, as you are yourself!"

Mr. Tufthunt did not like this style of address half so much as Lord Cinqbars, who was laughing immoderately, and to whom Tufthunt whispered rather sheepishly, "Pooh, pooh, he's drunk!"

"*Drunk!* no, sir," yelled out Brandon; "I'm mad, though, with the prudery of a little devil of fifteen, who has cost me more trouble than it would take me to seduce every one of your sisters — ha, ha! every one of the Miss Tufthunts, by Jove! Miss Suky Tufthunt, Miss Dolly Tufthunt, Miss Anna-Maria Tufthunt, and the whole bunch. Come, sir, don't sit scowling at *me*, or I'll brain you with the decanter." (Tufthunt was down again on the sofa.) "I've borne with the girl's mother, and her father, and her sisters, and a cook in the house, and a scoundrel of a painter, that I'm going to fight about her; and for what? — why, for a letter, which says, 'George, I'll kill myself! George, I'll kill myself!' — ha, ha! a little devil like that *killing* herself —— ha, ha! and I — I who — who adore her, who am mad for ——"

"Mad, I believe he is," said Tufthunt; and at this moment Mr. Brandon was giving the most unequivocal signs of madness; he plunged his head into the corner of the sofa, and was kicking his feet violently into the cushions.

"You don't understand him, Tufty my boy," said Lord Cinqbars, with a very superior air. "You ain't up to these things, I tell you; and I suspect, by Jove, that you never were in love in your life. *I* know what it is, sir. And as for Brandon, heaven bless you! I've often seen him in that way when we were abroad. When he has an intrigue, he's mad about it. Let me see, there was the Countess Fritzch, at Baden-Baden;

Digitized by Google

there was the woman at Pau; and that girl — at Paris, was it? — no, at Vienna. He went on just so about them all; but I'll tell you what, when *we* do the thing, we do it easier, my boy, hay?"

And so saying, my lord cocked up his little sallow, beardless face into a grin, and then fell to eyeing a glass of execrable claret across a candle. *An intrigue*, as he called it, was the little creature's delight; and until the time should arrive when he could have one himself, he loved to talk of those of his friends.

As for Tufthunt, we may fancy how that gentleman's previous affection for Brandon was increased by the latter's brutal addresses to him. Brandon continued to drink and to talk, though not always in the sentimental way in which he had spoken about his loves and injuries. Growing presently madly jocose as he had before been madly melancholy, he narrated to the two gentlemen the particulars of his quarrel with Fitch, mimicking the little painter's manner in an excessively comic way, and giving the most ludicrous account of his person, kept his companions in a roar of laughter. Cinqbars swore that he would see the fun in the morning, and agreed that if the painter wanted a second, either he or Tufthunt would act for him.

Now my Lord Cinqbars had an excessively clever servant, a merry rogue, whom he had discovered in the humble capacity of scout's assistant at Christchurch, and raised to be his valet. The chief duties of the valet were to black his lord's beautiful boots, that we have admired so much, and put his lordship to bed when overtaken with liquor. He heard every word of the young men's talk (it being his habit, much encouraged by his master, to join occasionally in the conversation); and in the course of the night, when at supper with Monsieur Donnerwetter and Mdlle. Augustine, he re-

Digitized by Google

lated every word of the talk abovestairs, mimicking Brandon quite as cleverly as the latter had mimicked Fitch. When then, after making his company laugh by describing Brandon's love-agonies, Mr. Tom informed them how that gentleman had a rival, with whom he was going to fight a duel the next morning — an artist-fellow with an immense beard, whose name was Fitch, to his surprise Mdlle. Augustine burst into a scream of laughter, and exclaimed, "*Feesh, Feesh! c'est notre homme;* — it is our man, sare! Saladin, remember you Mr. Fish?"

Saladin said gravely, "Missa Fis, Missa Fis! know 'um quite well, Missa Fis! Painter-man, big beard, gib Saladin bit injyrubby, Missis lub Missa Fis!"

It was too true, the fat lady was the famous MRS. CARRICKFERGUS, and she had come all the way from Rome in pursuit of her adored painter.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER IX

WHICH THREATENS DEATH, BUT CONTAINS A GREAT DEAL OF MARRYING

AS the morrow was to be an eventful day in the lives of all the heroes and heroines of this history, it will be as well to state how they passed the night previous. Brandon, like the English before the battle of Hastings, spent the evening in feasting and carousing; and Lord Cinqbars, at twelve o'clock, his usual time after his usual quantity of drink, was carried up to bed by the servant kept by his lordship for that purpose. Mr. Tufthunt took this as a hint to wish Brandon good-night, at the same time promising that he and Cinqbars would not fail him in the morning about the duel.

Shall we confess that Mr. Brandon, whose excitement now began to wear off, and who had a dreadful headache, did not at all relish the idea of the morrow's combat?

"If," said he, "I shoot this crack-brained painter, all the world will cry out, 'Murder!' If he shoot me, all the world will laugh at me! And yet, confound him! he seems so bent upon blood, that there is no escaping a meeting."

"At any rate," Brandon thought, "there will be no harm in a letter to Caroline." So, on arriving at home, he sat down and wrote a very pathetic one; saying that he fought in her cause, and if he died, his last breath

Digitized by Google

should be for her. So having written, he jumped into bed, and did not sleep one single wink all night.

As Brandon passed his night like the English, Fitch went through his like the Normans, in fasting, and mortification, and meditation. The poor fellow likewise indited a letter to Caroline: a very long and strong one, interspersed with pieces of poetry, and containing the words we have just heard him utter out of the window. Then he thought about making his will: but he recollected, and, indeed, it was a bitter thought to the young man, that there was not one single soul in the wide world who cared for him — except, indeed, thought he, after a pause, that poor Mrs. Carrickfergus at Rome, who *did* like me, and was the only person who ever bought my drawings. So he made over all his sketches to her, regulated his little property, found that he had money enough to pay his washerwoman; and so, having disposed of his worldly concerns, Mr. Fitch also jumped into bed, and speedily fell into a deep sleep. Brandon could hear him snoring all night, and did not feel a bit the more comfortable because his antagonist took matters so unconcernedly.

Indeed, our poor painter had no guilty thoughts in his breast, nor any particular revenge against Brandon, now that the first pangs of mortified vanity were over. But, with all his vagaries, he was a man of spirit; and after what had passed in the morning, the treason that had been done him, and the insults heaped upon him, he felt that the duel was irrevocable. He had a misty notion, imbibed somewhere, that it was the part of a gentleman's duty to fight duels, and had long been seeking for an opportunity. "Suppose I do die," said he, "what 's the odds? Caroline does n't care for me. Dr. Wackerbart's boys won't have their drawing-lesson next Wednesday; and no more will be said of poor Andrea."

Digitized by Google

And now for the garret. Caroline was wrapped up in her own woes, poor little soul! and in the arms of the faithful Becky cried herself to sleep. But the slow hours passed on; and the tide, which had been out, now came in; and the lamps waxed fainter and fainter; and the watchman cried six o'clock; and the sun arose and gilded the minarets of Margate; and Becky got up and scoured the steps, and the kitchen, and made ready the lodgers' breakfasts; and at half-past eight there came a thundering rap at the door, and two gentlemen, one with a mahogany case under his arm, asked for Mr. Brandon, and were shown up to his room by the astonished Becky, who was bidden by Mr. Brandon to get breakfast for three.

The thundering rap awakened Mr. Fitch, who rose and dressed himself in his best clothes, gave a twist of the curling-tongs to his beard, and conducted himself throughout with perfect coolness. Nine o'clock struck, and he wrapped his cloak round him, and put under his cloak that pair of foils which we have said he possessed, and did not know in the least how to use. However, he had heard his *camarades d'atelier*, at Paris and Rome, say that they were the best weapons for duelling; and so forth he issued.

Becky was in the passage as he passed down; she was always scrubbing there. "Becky," said Fitch, in a hollow voice, "here is a letter; if I should not return in half-an-hour, give it to Miss Gann, and promise on your honour that she shall not have it sooner." Becky promised. She thought the painter was at some of his mad tricks. He went out of the door saluting her gravely.

But he went only a few steps and came back again. "Becky," said he, "you — you 've always been a good girl to me, and here 's something for you; per'aps we

Digitized by Google

shan't — we shan't see each other for some time." The tears were in his eyes as he spoke, and he handed her over seven shillings and fourpence halfpenny, being every farthing he possessed in the world.

"Well, I'm sure!" said Becky; and that was all she said, for she pocketed the money, and fell to scrubbing again.

Presently the three gentlemen upstairs came clattering down. "Lock bless you, don't be in such a 'urry!" exclaimed Becky; "it's full herly yet, and the water's not biling."

"We'll come back to breakfast, my dear," said one, a little gentleman in high-heeled boots; "and, I thay, mind and have thum thoda-water." And he walked out, twirling his cane. His friend with the case followed him. Mr. Brandon came last.

He too turned back after he had gone a few paces. "Becky," said he, in a grave voice, "if I am not back in half-an-hour, give that to Miss Gann."

Becky was fairly flustered by this; and after turning the letters round and round, and peeping into the sides, and looking at the seals very hard, she like a fool determined that she would not wait half-an-hour, but carry them up to Miss Caroline; and so up she mounted, finding pretty Caroline in the act of lacing her stays.

And the consequences of Becky's conduct was that little Carry left off lacing her stays (a sweet little figure the poor thing looked in them; but that is neither here nor there), took the letters, looked at one which she threw down directly; at the other, which she eagerly opened, and having read a line or two, gave a loud scream, and fell down dead in a fainting fit!

. . . . . .

Waft us, O Muse! to Mr. Wright's hotel, and quick narrate what chances there befell. Very early in the

Digitized by Google

morning Mdlle. Augustine made her appearance in the apartment of Miss Runt, and with great glee informed that lady of the event which was about to take place. "Figurez-vous, mademoiselle, que notre homme va se battre — oh, but it will be droll to see him sword in hand!"

"Don't plague me with your ojous servants' quarrels, Augustine; that horrid courier is always quarrelling and tipsy."

"Mon Dieu, qu'elle est bête!" exclaimed Augustine: "but I tell you it is not the courier; it is he, l'objet, le peintre dont madame s'est amourachée, Monsieur Feesh."

"Mr. Fitch!" cried Runt, jumping up in bed. "Mr. Fitch going to fight! Augustine, my stockings — quick, my *robe-de-chambre* — tell me when, how, where?"

And so Augustine told her that the combat was to take place at nine that morning, behind the Windmill, and that the gentleman with whom Mr. Fitch was to go out, had been dining at the hotel the night previous, in company with the little milor, who was to be his second.

Quick as lightning flew Runt to the chamber of her patroness. That lady was in a profound sleep; and I leave you to imagine what were her sensations on awaking and hearing this dreadful tale.

Such is the force of love, that although, for many years, Mrs. Carrickfergus had never left her bed before noon, although in all her wild wanderings after the painter she, nevertheless, would have her tea and cutlet in bed, and her doze likewise, before she set forth on a journey — she now started up in an instant, forgetting her nap, mutton-chops, everything, and began dressing with a promptitude which can only be equalled by Harlequin when disguising himself in a pantomime.

Digitized by Google

She would have had an attack of nerves, only she knew there was no time for it; and I do believe that twenty minutes were scarcely over her head, as the saying is, when her bonnet and cloak were on, and with her whole suite, and an inn-waiter or two whom she pressed into her service, she was on full trot to the field of action. For twenty years before, and from that day to this, Marianne Carrickfergus never had or has walked so quickly.

. . . . . .

"Hullo, here 'th a go!" exclaimed Lord Viscount Cinqbars, as they arrived on the ground behind the Windmill; "cuth me there 'th only one man!"

This was indeed the case; Mr. Fitch, in his great cloak, was pacing slowly up and down the grass, his shadow stretching far in the sunshine. Mr. Fitch was alone too; for the fact is, he had never thought about a second. This he admitted frankly, bowing with much majesty to the company as they came up. "But that, gents," said he, "will make no difference, I hope, nor prevent fair play from being done." And, flinging off his cloak, he produced the foils, from which the buttons had been taken off. He went up to Brandon, and was for offering him one of the weapons, just as they do at the theatre. Brandon stepped back, rather abashed: Cinqbars looked posed; Tufthunt delighted. "Ecod," said he, "I hope the bearded fellow will give it him."

"Excuse me, sir," said Mr. Brandon; "as the challenged party, I demand pistols."

Mr. Fitch, with great presence of mind and gracefulness, stuck the swords into the grass.

"Oh, pithtolth of courth," lisped my lord; and presently called aside Tufthunt, to whom he whispered something in great glee; to which Tufthunt objected at

Digitized by Google

first, saying, "No, d—— him, let him fight." "And your fellowship and living, Tufty my boy?" interposed my lord; and then they walked on. After a couple of minutes, during which Mr. Fitch was employed in examining Mr. Brandon from the toe upwards to the crown of his head, or hat, just as Mr. Widdicombe does Mr. Cartlich, before those two gentlemen proceed to join in combat on the boards of Astley's Amphitheatre (indeed poor Fitch had no other standard of chivalry) — when Fitch had concluded this examination, of which Brandon did not know what the deuce to make, Lord Cinqbars came back to the painter, and gave him a nod.

"Sir," said he, "as you have come unprovided with a second, I, with your leave, will act as one. My name is Cinqbars — Lord Cinqbars; and though I had come to the ground to act as the friend of my friend here, Mr. Tufthunt will take that duty upon him; and as it appears to me there can be no other end to this unhappy affair, we will proceed at once."

It is a marvel how Lord Cinqbars ever made such a gentlemanly speech. When Fitch heard that he was to have a lord for a second, he laid his hand on his chest, and vowed it was the greatest h-honour of his life; and was turning round to walk towards his ground, when my lord, gracefully thrusting his tongue into his cheek, and bringing his thumb up to his nose, twiddled about his fingers for a moment, and said to Brandon, "Gammon!"

Mr. Brandon smiled, and heaved a great, deep, refreshing sigh. The truth was, a load was taken off his mind, of which he was very glad to be rid; for there was something in the coolness of that crazy painter that our fashionable gentleman did not at all approve of.

"I think, Mr. Tufthunt," said Lord Cinqbars, very loud, "that considering the gravity of the case — threatening horsewhipping, you know, lie on both sides, and

Digitized by Google

lady in the case — I think we must have the barrier-duel."

"What 's that?" asked Fitch.

"The simplest thing in the world; and," in a whisper, "let me add, the best for you. Look here. We shall put you at twenty paces, and a hat between you. You walk forward and fire when you like. When you fire, you stop; and you both have the liberty of walking up to the hat. Nothing can be more fair than that."

"Very well," said Fitch; and, with a great deal of preparation, the pistols were loaded.

"I tell you what," whispered Cinqbars to Fitch, "if I had n't chosen this way you were a dead man. If he fires he hits you dead. You must not let him fire, but have him down first."

"I 'll try," said Fitch, who was a little pale, and thanked his noble friend for his counsel. The hat was placed and the men took their places.

"Are you all ready?"

"Ready," said Brandon.

"Advance when I drop my handkerchief." And presently down it fell, Lord Cinqbars crying, "Now!"

The combatants both advanced, each covering his man. When he had gone about six paces, Fitch stopped, fired, and — missed. He grasped his pistol tightly, for he was very near dropping it; and then stood biting his lips, and looking at Brandon, who grinned savagely, and walked up to the hat.

"Will you retract what you said of me yesterday, you villain?" said Brandon.

"I can't."

"Will you beg for life?"

"No."

"Then take a minute, and make your peace with God, for you are a dead man."

Digitized by Google

Fitch dropped his pistol to the ground, shut his eyes for a moment, and flinging up his chest and clenching his fists, said, "*Now I'm ready.*"

Brandon *fired* — and strange to say, Andrea Fitch, as he gasped and staggered backwards, saw, or thought he saw, Mr. Brandon's pistol flying up in the air, where it went off, and heard that gentleman yell out an immense oath in a very audible voice. When he came to himself, a thick stick was lying at Brandon's feet; Mr. Brandon was capering about the ground, and cursing and shaking a maimed elbow, and a whole posse of people were rushing upon them. The first was the great German courier, who rushed upon Brandon, and shook that gentleman, and shouting, "Schelm! spitzbube! blagard! goward!" in his ear. "If I had not drown my stick and brogen his damt arm, he wod have murdered dat boor young man."

The German's speech contained two unfounded assertions; in the first place Brandon would not have murdered Fitch; and, secondly, his arm was not broken — he had merely received a blow on that part which anatomists call the funny-bone: a severe blow, which sent the pistol spinning into the air, and caused the gentleman to scream with pain. Two waiters seized upon the murderer, too; a baker, who had been brought from his rounds, a bellman, several boys, — were yelling round him, and shouting out, "Pole-e-eace!"

Next to these came, panting and blowing, some women. Could Fitch believe his eyes? — that fat woman in red satin! — yes — no — yes — he was, he was in the arms of Mrs. Carrickfergus!

. . . . . .

The particulars of this meeting are too delicate to relate. Suffice it that somehow matters were explained, Mr. Brandon was let loose, and a fly was presently seen

Digitized by Google

to drive up, into which Mr. Fitch consented to enter with his new-found friend.

Brandon had some good movements in him. As Fitch was getting into the carriage, he walked up to him and held out his left hand: "I can't offer you my right hand, Mr. Fitch, for that cursed courier's stick has maimed it; but I hope you will allow me to apologise for my shameful conduct to you, and to say that I never in my life met a more gallant fellow than yourself."

"That he is, by Jove!" said my Lord Cinqbars.

Fitch blushed as red as a peony, and trembled very much. "And yet," said he, "you would have murdered me just now, Mr. Brandon. I can't take your 'and, sir."

"Why, you great flat," said my lord, wisely, "he could n't have hurt you, nor you him. There wath no ballth in the pithtolth."

"What," said Fitch, starting back, "do you gents call that *a joke?* Oh, my lord, my lord!" And here poor Fitch actually burst into tears on the red satin bosom of Mrs. Carrickfergus: she and Miss Runt were crying as hard as they could. And so, amidst much shouting and huzzaing, the fly drove away.

"What a blubbering, abthurd donkey!" said Cinqbars, with his usual judgment; "ain't he, Tufthunt?"

Tufthunt, of course, said yes; but Brandon was in a virtuous mood. "By heavens! I think his tears do the man honour. When I came out with him this morning, I intended to act fairly by him. And as for Mr. Tufthunt, who calls a man a coward because he cries — Mr. Tufthunt knows well what a pistol is, and that some men don't care to face it, brave as they are."

Mr. Tufthunt understood the hint, and bit his lips and walked on. And as for that worthy moralist, Mr. Brandon, I am happy to say that there was some good fortune in store for him, which, though similar in kind

Digitized by Google

to that bestowed lately upon Mr. Fitch, was superior in degree.

It was no other than this, that forgetting all maidenly decency and decorum, before Lord Viscount Cinqbars and his friend, that silly little creature, Caroline Gann, rushed out from the parlour into the passage — she had been at the window ever since she was rid of her fainting fit! and ah! what agonies of fear had that little panting heart endured during the half-hour of her lover's absence! — Caroline Gann, I say, rushed into the passage, and leaped upon the neck of Brandon, and kissed him, and called him her dear, dear, dear, darling George, and sobbed, and laughed, until George, taking her round the waist gently, carried her into the little dingy parlour, and closed the door behind him.

"Egad," cried Cinqbars, "this is quite a *thene!* Hullo, Becky, Polly, what's your name? — bring uth up the breakfatht; and I hope you've remembered the thoda-water. Come along upthtairth, Tufty my boy."

. . . . . .

When Brandon came upstairs and joined them, which he did in a minute or two, consigning Caroline to Becky's care, his eyes were full of tears; and when Cinqbars began to rally him in his usual delicate way, Brandon said gravely, "No laughing, sir, if you please; for I swear that that lady before long shall be my wife."

"Your wife! — and what will your father say, and what will your duns say, and what will Miss Goldmore say, with her hundred thousand pounds?" cried Cinqbars.

"Miss Goldmore be hanged," said Brandon, "and the duns too; and my father may reconcile it to himself as he can." And here Brandon fell into a reverie.

"It's no use thinking," he cried, after a pause. "You see what a girl it is, Cinqbars. I love her — by heavens, I'm mad with love for her! She shall be mine, let

Digitized by Google

what will come of it. And besides," he added, in a lower tone of voice, "why need, why need my father know anything about it?"

"O flames and furies, what a lover it is!" exclaimed his friend. "But, by Jove, I like your spirit; and hang all governors say I. Stop — a bright thought! If you must marry, why here's Tom Tufthunt, the very man to do your business." Little Lord Cinqbars was delighted with the excitement of the affair, and thought to himself, "By Jove, this *is* an intrigue!"

"What, is Tufthunt in orders?" said Brandon.

"Yes," replied that reverend gentleman: "don't you see my coat? I took orders six weeks ago, on my fellowship. Cinqbars' governor has promised me a living."

"And you shall marry George here, so you shall."

"What, without a licence?"

"Hang the licence! — we won't peach, will we, George?"

"Her family must know nothing of it," said George, "or *they* would."

"Why should they? Why should n't Tom marry you in this very room, without any church or stuff at all?"

Tom said: "You 'll hold me out, my lord, if anything comes of it; and, if Brandon likes, why, I *will*. He 's done for if he does," muttered Tufthunt, "and I have had my revenge on him, the bullying, supercilious blackleg."

. . . . . .

And so on that very day, in Brandon's room, without a licence, and by that worthy clergyman the Rev. Thomas Tufthunt, with my Lord Cinqbars for the sole witness, poor Caroline Gann, who knew no better, who never heard of licences, and did not know what banns meant, was married in a manner to the person calling himself George Brandon; George Brandon not being his real name.

Digitized by Google

No writings at all were made, and the ceremony merely read through. Becky, Caroline's sole guardian, when the poor girl kissed her, and, blushing, showed her gold ring, thought all was in order: and the happy couple set off for Dover that day, with fifty pounds which Cinqbars lent the bridegroom.

Becky received a little letter from Caroline, which she promised to carry to her mamma at Swigby's: and it was agreed that she was to give warning, and come and live with her young lady. Next morning Lord Cinqbars and Tufthunt took the boat for London; the latter uneasy in mind, the former vowing that "he'd never spent such an exciting day in his life, and loved an intrigue of all things."

Next morning, too, the great travelling-chariot of Mrs. Carrickfergus rolled away with a bearded gentleman inside. Poor Fitch had been back to his lodgings to try one more chance with Caroline, and he arrived in time — to see her get into a postchaise alone with Brandon.

Six weeks afterwards *Galignani's Messenger* contained the following announcement: —

"Married, at the British embassy, by Bishop Luscombe, Andrew Fitch, Esq., to Marianne Caroline Matilda, widow of the late Antony Carrickfergus, of Lombard Street and Gloucester Place, Esquire. The happy pair, after a magnificent déjeûné, set off for the south in their splendid carriage-and-four. Miss Runt officiated as bride's-maid; and we remarked among the company Earl and Countess Crabs, General Sir Rice Curry, K. C. B., Colonel Wapshot, Sir Charles Swang, the Hon. Algernon Percy Deuceace and his lady, Count Punter, and others of the *élite* of the fashionables now in Paris. The bridegroom was attended by his friend Michael Angelo Titmarsh, Esquire; and the lady was given away by the Right Hon. the Earl of Crabs. On the departure of the bride and

Digitized by Google

bridegroom the festivities were resumed, and many a sparkling bumper of Meurice's champagne was quaffed to the health of the hospitable and interesting couple."

And with one more marriage this chapter shall conclude. About this time the British Auxiliary Legion came home from Spain; and Lieut.-General Swabber, a knight of San Fernando, of the order of Isabella the Catholic, of the Tower and Sword, who, as plain Lieutenant Swabber, had loved Miss Isabella Macarty, as a general now actually married her. I leave you to suppose how glorious Mrs. Gann was, and how Gann got tipsy at the "Bag of Nails;" but as her daughters each insisted upon their 30*l.* a year income, and Mrs. Gann had so only 60*l.* left, she was obliged still to continue the lodging-house at Margate, in which have occurred the most interesting passages of this SHABBY GENTEEL STORY.

Becky never went to her young mistress, who was not heard of after she wrote the letter to her parent, saying that she was married to Mr. Brandon; but, for *particular reasons*, her dear husband wished to keep his marriage secret, and for the present her beloved parents must be content to know she was happy. Gann missed his little Carry at first a good deal, but spent more and more of his time at the ale-house, as his house with only Mrs. Gann in it was too hot for him. Mrs. Gann talked unceasingly of her daughter the squire's lady, and her daughter the general's wife; but never once mentioned Caroline after the first burst of wonder and wrath at her departure.

God bless thee, poor Caroline! Thou art happy now, for some short space at least; and here, therefore, let us leave thee.

Digitized by Google

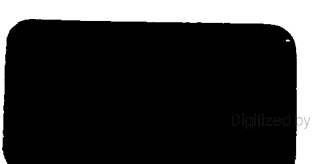
Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

HW 2SF8 J



Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google